

T H E
CHRISTIAN:
A
P O E M,
I N
F O U R B O O K S.

*Believe, and shew the Reason of a Man !
Believe, and taste the Pleasure of a God !*

Y O U N G.

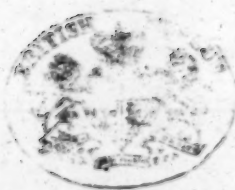
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CHRISTIAN

BOOK



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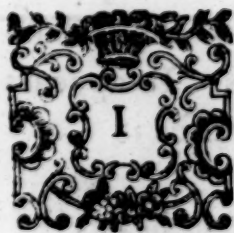
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STRANGE

WILLIAM WATTS, LONDON



P R E F A C E.



 Thought it might be of service if I prefixed to this Poem a few remarks on some of the proofs of the Truth of Christianity. It is required in an age like this, when its adversaries are so vehement in their attacks upon it, that its friends should exert themselves in its defence. It is at such a time inexcusable in those who know the truth and advantage of it, and understand any of the arguments in its favour, not to support it as far as they are able. Not to defend is here almost as bad as to relinquish.

And now before I enter further upon the subject, I will assure him who honours me with an

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attention,

attention to these pages, that I mean to treat of it in a manner totally devoid of all improper heat or bigotry. I am desirous of making a manly appeal to reason. I feel for a man who rejects the truth of the gospel, as I do for a sick man who spurns the medicine from him which can relieve him. I would forbear in a dispute with him from every the least approbrious term. I cannot conceive it possible, without a man's understanding is perverted, that he should think it agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel, that he should treat his antagonist in an argument with ill-nature or intemperance. He should learn from that Gospel, if he is not disposed to it from himself, to treat him with mildness and with patience. It seems to me also to be a consequence of the conviction of truth that one should dispute of it with calmness as well as firmness. It appears best, as our divine poet * finely expresses it,

By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear.

The proofs of the truth of Christianity are so various, that I scarcely know which I shall first adduce. The nature of a preface will not allow me to dwell upon many of them. I shall confine myself therefore to some of the most important and satisfactory. It cannot be expected that there will
be

* Milton, in Paradise Regained.

be much novelty in arguments upon this subject. It is useful however to engage the attention to such arguments, though they have been urged before.

I shall begin with observations upon some of the Prophecies, of which we now see the fullfillment, or which can be proved by indisputable evidence to have been fullfilled. The disperſion of the Jews was more than three thouſand years ago foretold by Moſes, and afterwards by other prophets, and laſtly by Chriſt himſelf, in as circumſtantial a manner, as any one could deſcribe it, after having ſeen the event. Moſes foretels the ſiege and the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans. He ſays, (ſpeaking to the Jews) “ The Lord ſhall bring a nation a-
 “ gainſt thee from far, from the end of the earth,
 “ as ſwift as the eagle flieth, a nation whoſe tongue
 “ thou ſhall not underſtand : a nation of fierce
 “ countenance, which ſhall not regard the perſon
 “ of the old, nor ſhew favour to the young. And
 “ he ſhall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and of the
 “ fruit of thy land until thou be deſtroyed : which
 “ alſo ſhall not leave thee either corn, wine, or
 “ oil, or the increaſe of thy kine, or flocks of thy
 “ ſheep, until he have deſtroyed thee. And he
 “ ſhall beſiege thee in all thy gates, throughout
 “ all the land which the Lord thy God hath given
 “ thee. And thou ſhalt eat the fruit of thine own
 “ body, the fleſh of thy ſons and of thy daughters,
 “ (which the Lord thy God hath given thee) in
 “ the

“ the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine
 “ enemies shall distress thee *.” And afterwards
 he says, “ And ye shall be left few in number,
 “ whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multi-
 “ tude, because thou wouldest not obey the voice
 “ of the Lord thy God. And it shall come to pass,
 “ that has the Lord rejoiced over you, to do you
 “ good, and to multiply you : so the Lord will re-
 “ joice over you, to destroy you, and to bring you
 “ to nought : and ye shall be plucked from off the
 “ land, whither thou goest to possess it. And the
 “ Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from
 “ the one end of the earth even unto the other,
 “ and thou shalt serve other gods, which neither
 “ thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood
 “ and stone. And among those nations shall thou
 “ find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot
 “ have rest, but the Lord shall give thee there a
 “ trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow
 “ of mind †.” And Jeremiah says, “ And of your
 “ brethren that are not gone forth with you into
 “ captivity : Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold,
 “ I will send upon them the sword, the famine,
 “ and the pestilence, and will make them like vile
 “ figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. And
 “ I will persecute them with the sword, with the
 “ famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver
 “ them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the
 “ earth,

* Deuteronomy, chap. xxvii. ver. 49.

† Deuteronomy, chap. xxviii. ver. 62.

“ earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and
 “ an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations
 “ whither I have driven them *.” And Our Sa-
 viour says of them, “ And they shall fall by the
 “ edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive
 “ into all nations : and Jerusalem be trodden down
 “ of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles
 “ be fulfilled †.”

It cannot be said that these Prophecies were written after the event, (which is the evasion that most unbelievers fly to from the argument drawn in favour of Christianity, from the completion of what has been foretold by the sacred writers) for we now this very day, see the event taking place. It is known by every one, that the Jews are now “ plucked off from their land,” that they are now “ scattered among all people, from the one end of “ the earth, even unto the other.” It is beyond a doubt that many of them have joined in the idolatries of the Roman Catholics, through the terrors of the inquisition, “ that they have served other “ gods, which neither they nor their forefathers “ have known, even wood and stone.” Who is ignorant that the Jews are now, “ a curse, and an “ astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach,” in every part of the globe, and that “ Jerusalem “ is trodden down of the Gentiles?”---Every one who

* Jeremiah, chap. xxix. ver. 16, 17, 18.

† Luke chap. xxi. ver. xxiv.

who has read history also knows, that the Romans "besieged Jerusalem in all her gates," and that all the particulars which Moses foretold in regard to the siege, actually happened. It is not possible with the least appearance of reason to ascribe these prophetic descriptions to chance. Such an extraordinary, such a singular event, as the dispersion of a nation without their extinction, had never happened before the prophecy that the Jews would be dispersed. Nor had Moses, and the other prophets who declared it, (in the writings of whom we find many particulars in regard to the present dispersion of the Jews, described perhaps in a more lively and just manner, than any one could at this day describe them, after having diligently considered the living particulars themselves) nor had they any reason to suppose, not only from experience, but from the contemplation of human affairs, that such an event would ever happen. They could only have uttered these prophecies, through the particular inspiration of him who foresees all events. If these prophecies therefore of the siege of Jerusalem, of the dispersion of the Jews, of Jerusalem being trodden down of the Gentiles, have been uttered through the particular inspiration of God, it is the part of reason to believe that those who uttered them came from God, that their writings or doctrines are divine, and in short, that Christianity is a true and certain revelation.

I will

I will now make some observations upon the famous prophecy of Daniel in regard to the Messiah.

“ Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself, and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate *.”

B

before

* Daniel, chap. ix. ver. 24.

Before I enter into the investigation of the particular parts of this prophecy, it is necessary I think to obviate the objections which may be made by unbelievers, (to whom I chiefly address myself) in regard to the fairness and propriety of interpreting these seventy weeks, mentioned by the Prophet, as four hundred and ninety years. A week in the language of the Prophets sometimes means seven years, and a day is by them used for a year. This will appear to be so, not by any forced or unnatural construction of their language, but from their own express declarations. It is said in Genesis, "Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me, yet seven other years *." In Numbers, "After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, (each day for a year,) shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years †." And in Ezekiel; "And thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year §." If a day therefore in the prophetic language means a year, and a week (or seven days) is to be understood for seven years, seventy weeks will signify four hundred and ninety years. With this point being settled I will go on with my comments on the prophecy. The Prophet says, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city

* Chap. xxix. ver. 27. † Chap. xiv. 34. § Chap. iv. ver. 6.

“ city, to finish the transgression, and to make an
 “ end of sins, and to make reconciliation for ini-
 “ quity.” That is, in about four hundred and
 ninety years, there shall come to “ thy holy city,”
 that is, to Jerusalem, (for the angel delivers from
 his own mouth the prophecy to Daniel) a spiritual
 deliverer ; “ to bring in everlasting righteousness,”
 who shall teach a gospel that shall prevail for ever,
 “ and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and
 “ to anoint the most Holy,” and in whose most
 sacred character the prophecies shall be compleat.
 Now let me ask in the name of candor, to whom
 this can possibly relate but to Jesus Christ? Is
 there any other person to whom we can with the
 least appearance of reason apply the prophecy?
 the character is so particular as not to be in the
 least compatible with any one else. The time also
 that the Prophet mentions is definite. He has put
 his knowledge of futurity to the fairest test that
 can be conceived. He declares the very time when
 the Messiah is to appear. If the Messiah does ap-
 pear therefore at the time he mentions, one would
 think that the most stubborn unbeliever would ac-
 knowledge that as he was a true Prophet, he was
 præter-naturally inspired by God, and that there is
 some reason to believe that Christianity is a divine
 revelation. And that the Prophet uttered a true
 prophecy, is beyond a doubt. For we find that
 four hundred and ninety years after “ the com-
 mandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,” (from

which period the seventy weeks are to begin) the Messiah, that is, Jesus Christ, died. From the seventh year of Artaxerxes when Ezra * went up from Babylon to Jerusalem with a commission to restore the government to the Jews, to the death of Christ, (from anno Nabonassar 290, to anno Nabonassar 780) is exactly four hundred and ninety years, or "seventy weeks."

If in answer to this method of reasoning it should be urged that no satisfactory conclusion can be drawn from a prophecy, which is so obscure, so enveloped with mystery, as to appear like a riddle, I must observe that this seeming obscurity proceeds from our unjustifiable indolence in not having given the prophetic language the attention it merits. To one well read in the Old Testament, there would be no difficulty in comprehending the meaning of the Prophet. And it appears from the sacred writings, and from profane authors, that the Jews universally agreed in calculating these seventy weeks as four hundred and ninety years. It appears that they eagerly expected the Messiah at the time of Our Saviour's appearance upon earth. St. Luke says of Simeon, "And the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel †."

And

* Vide Ezra, chap. vii. ver. 6. to the conclusion of the chapter : and Dr. Clarke's Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, pag.

429,

† Chap. 2. ver. 29.

And again, of Anna the prophetess, "And she
 " coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto
 " the Lord, and spake of him to all them that
 " looked for redemption in Israel *." Tacitus,
 (when speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem)
 mentions that many of the Jews expected, that at
 that time, a great prince would arise in Judea.
 Suetonius in his Life of the Emperor Vespasian,
 says, that such an expectation had without inter-
 mission, for a long time, prevailed over all the
 east, that it induced the Jews to rebel, from whence
 they put to death a Roman General, and seized
 the eagle. His words are, " Percrebuerant Oriente
 " toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis ut eo
 " tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Id de
 " imperatore Romano quantum eventu postea præ-
 " dictum patuit, Judæi ad se trahentes rebellant;
 " cæsoque preposito, legatum insuper Syriæ consula-
 " rem suppetias ferentem, rapta aquila fugaverunt."
 We find in St. Matth. † that the Eastern Magi at the
 birth of Christ, upon the appearance of his star in
 the east (which appearance is also mentioned by a
 Pagan author) came to Jerusalem to enquire for
 the King of the Jews. They were full of the ex-
 pectation which had taken possession of the minds of
 every one in the east. And Herod suspecting that
 his kingdom would be wrested from him by this
 new king that was to arise, (as we are told by the
 Evan-

* St. Luke, chap. ii. ver. 38. † Chap. ii. ver. 1---12.

Evangelist) “sent forth and slew all the children that
 “were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof,
 “from two years and under *.” This fact is also
 mentioned with a trivial difference by a Pagan au-
 thor; which proves that he did not obtain his
 knowledge of it through the channel of the Evan-
 gelist. Macrobius where he speaks of the witty
 sayings of the Emperor Augustus, mentions one
 that he spoke upon his hearing, that Herod King
 of the Jews had killed all the children in Syria,
 under two years of age. He says of Augustus,
 “Cum audisset inter pueros quos in Syria Herodes
 “Rex Judæorum intra bimatum jussit interfici,
 “filium quoque ejus occisum, ait melius est herodis
 “esse porcum, quam filium †”. We find then from
 evidence which can be disputed by none, that about
 the time of Our Saviour’s appearance upon earth,
 the Jews did expect their great prince or Messiah
 would arise, which is an indisputable proof that the
 words of the Prophet are to be interpreted in the
 method that Christians agree to interpret them, that
 the “seventy weeks” are to be understood as four
 hundred and ninety years; and it moreover proves
 that

* Matth. chap. ii. ver. 16.

† Vide Macrobius, lib. ii. cap. 4.---Voltaire, in that detestable
 book, his Philosophical Dictionary, says, that there is no Pagan au-
 thor whatever, who mentions the fact of Herod’s killing the children
 in Bethlehem, which is related by the Evangelists. This passage from
 Macrobius manifests however that he is mistaken, and should inform
 his admirers how rash and how unworthy it is of the gravity and
 firmness of a man of understanding, to be beguiled in regard to his
 dearest and most important interests, by the random assertions of
 a half-lettered declaimer.

that this celebrated passage of Daniel is not an interpolation, that it was not written after the event. For from what could have proceeded this expectation of a Messiah's arising, but from a prophecy that one would arise ? It must have taken its origin from some cause. But Tacitus however says expressly, that it proceeded from its being mentioned by the antient Prophets of the Jews, that a great prince would arise among them. His words are, "*Pluribus persuasio, inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur.*" It is impossible however that there could be any deception, in regard to an interpolation of this passage into Daniel, after the event : which is the evasion to which unbelievers have frequently recourse. For have not all the Jews of the present time the Old Testament in their possession, in which as well as this, are all the other prophecies that relate to Our Saviour ? Do they intimate that the prophecies which we say relate to Our Saviour, are interpolations ? If they were interpolations, if they had been fabricated by the followers of Christ, would not such an attempt to deceive, have caused the Jews to have exposed the attempt, with the most furious and active zeal ? Does not all that the Jews urge in regard to this point amount to this, that we who are Christians do not properly understand, but mistake the meaning of these prophecies ?---It may be affirmed therefore as an absolute

solute certainty, that Daniel wrote this prophecy, that it was uttered before the event. And that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, is to be proved with equal certainty.---To render which indisputable, I shall transcribe a passage, from Dr. Clarke's Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, which is worthy of the attentive consideration of every serious enquirer after truth. He says *,

“ Concerning the Messiah it was foretold, Gen. xlix. 10. that he “ should come, before the sceptre
 “ departed from Judah:” And accordingly Christ appeared a little before the time, when the Jewish government was totally destroyed by the Romans. It was foretold that he should come before the destruction of the second temple, Hagg. ii. 7.
 “ The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill
 “ this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts; the
 “ glory of this latter house, shall be greater than of
 “ the former:” And accordingly Christ appeared, some time before the destruction of the city and temple: It was foretold that he should come at the end of 490 years, after the restoring of Jerusalem which had then laid waste during the captivity, Dan. ix. 24. and that he should “ be cut off;” and that, after that, “ the city and sanctuary should be
 “ destroyed and made desolate:” And accordingly at that time soever the beginning of the four hundred

* Vide Dr. Clarke's Evidences of, &c. pag. 388.

dred and ninety years can, according to any interpretation of the words to be fixt ; the end of them will fall about the time of Christ's appearing ; and it is well known how entirely the " city and sanctuary " were destroyed" some years after " his being cut off." It was foretold that he should do many great and beneficial miracles ; that " the eyes of the blind " should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped," Ifai. xxxv. 5. that " the lame man should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:" And this was literally fulfilled in the miracles of Christ ; " The blind received their sight, Matth. xi. 5. and the lame walked ; the deaf heard, &c.'" It was foretold that he should die a violent death, Ifai. liii, chapter *throughout*, and that " not for himself," Dan. ix, 26, but " for our transgressions." Ifai. liii. 5, 6. and 12. for " the iniquity of us all," and that he might bear " the sins of many : " All which was exactly accomplished in the sufferings of Christ. It was foretold, Gen. xlix. 10. that " to him " should " the gathering of the people be," and Psal. ii. 8. that God would " give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession ; " which was punctually fulfilled by the wonderful success of the Gospel, and its universal spreading through the world. Lastly, Many minuter circumstances were foretold of the Messiah ; that he should be of the " tribe of Judah," and of " the seed of David ; " that he should be born in the town " Bethlehem," Mic. v. 2. that he should

“ride upon an ass” in humble triumph into the city of Jerusalem,” Zech. ix. 9. that he should be “sold for thirty pieces of silver,” Zech. xi. 12. That he should be “scourged, buffeted, and spit upon,” Isai. l. 6. That “his hands and feet” should “be pierced,” Psal. xxii. 16. That he should be numbered among malefactors, Isai. liii. 12. That he should have “gall and vinegar” offered him to drink, Psal. lxix. 21. That they who saw him crucified should “mock” at him, and at his “trusting in God to deliver him,” Psal. xvi. 10. That the soldiers should “cast lots for his garments,” Psal. xxii. 18. That he should “make his grave with the rich,” Isai. liii. 9. and that he should rise again without “seeing corruption,” Psal. xvi. 10. All which circumstances were fulfilled with the greatest possible exactness in the person of Christ: not to mention the numberless *typical* representations, which had likewise evidently their complete accomplishment in *him*. And ’tis no less evident, that none of these prophecies can possibly be applied to any other person, that ever pretended to be the Messiah.”

I think it must from hence appear indisputable to every deliberate and fair reasoner, that all the prophecies are not enthusiastic and visionary rhapsodies, and that Christianity is not an idle tale. The deepest philosophers, and the greatest geniuses

in the world *, have, after the maturest investigation, believed in it : and we may well reply to many an unbeliever of the present age, in the words of the wise man, “ Blame not before thou hast examined the truth, understand first, and then rebuke.”

I will now make some observations on the prophecies in regard to Popery. Is it possible for any person of candor and of good understanding, to read the second Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, and not then to acknowledge that it contains a description of Popery ? After entreating them not to be troubled, as if the day of Christ was at hand, he writes, “ Let no man deceive you by any means ; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition : who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped : so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God †.” And again, “ And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming ; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and

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“ lying

* Sir Isaac Newton, Locke, Bacon, Boyle, Milton, Shakespear, gave frequent and faithful acknowledgments of the truth of the gospel,

† Second Epistle Thess. chap. ii. ver. 3, 4.

“lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of un-
 “righteousness in them that perish *.”

And again, St. Paul, in the first Epistle to Timothy, writes, “Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a red hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats †.”

Is it possible to read the 17th chapter of Revelation, and not allow that it contains a description of popery? St. John says, “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, and I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and
 “decked

* Second Epistle Thess. chap. ii. ver. 8, 9, 10.

† First Epistle Tim. chap. iv. ver. 1, 2, 3.

“ decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls,
 “ having a golden cup in her hand, full of abomi-
 “ nations and filthiness of her fornication. And
 “ upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY,
 “ BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HAR-
 “ LOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
 “ And I saw the woman drunken with the blood
 “ of the saints *, and with the blood of the mar-
 “ tyrs of Jesus §.” And again in the same chap-
 ter,

§ Revelation, chap. xvii. ver. 1--7.

* One can not sufficiently admire the justness and boldness of the phrase of “ drunken with the blood of the saints.” It is finely eloquent. A well known instance may be produced out of ten thousand to shew how the Church of Rome may be made “ drunken with blood.” On St. Bartholomew’s day, about thirty thousand Protestants were massacred in cold blood, in France: upon the hearing of which the Pope went in solemn procession to the church of St. Lewis to sing Te Deum, and represented the affrightful and detestable scene in a magnificent picture, with the inscription of “ The Triumph of the Church.” This should feelingly inform us, how necessary it is to guard with the extreme of caution, against the increase of Roman Catholics. It is unwise to tolerate them, as their principles are destructive to society, as they will when they have the stronger hand, extirpate those who differ from them in opinion, by fire and sword. This has been proved in the most satisfactory manner by the celebrated Mr. Locke, in his admirable Essay on Toleration, to which I would wish ardently to recommend the reader. It is to be remarked, that if any minister ever wished thro’ policy, though no Roman Catholic himself, to introduce the Roman Catholic religion into England, on account of its being favourable to arbitrary power, (which one would suppose a crime nearly equal to that of blasphemy against the holy spirit of God) he would insinuate it under the specious pretence of toleration. It would be the part of madness to attempt, openly and in the face of day, to obtrude it upon the nation. In the reign of James the second, the Cabal which directed the government, (which consisted of the King, of Lord Sunderland the Minister, of Father Petre, a Jesuit and Confessor to the Queen, and of four Roman Catholic Lords) aimed insensibly to draw over the kingdom to Popery, by procuring a free admission of Roman Catholics into “ offices, by a toleration of their religion, by a suppression of the “ penal laws against them, and briefly, by confounding the distinction “ between Roman Catholics and Protestants.” Whenever therefore

ter, " And here is the mind which hath wisdom.
 " The seven heads are seven mountains on which
 " the woman sitteth *." And again, " And the
 " woman which thou sawest, is that great city,
 " which reigneth over the kings of the earth †."

We have the evidence of history that St. Paul wrote the Epistles to the Thessalonians and to Timothy: the point has never been disputed. Eusebius § in his Ecclesiastical history says, that the authority of the Epistles to the Hebrews, and of some others, was for a little while dubious, but they were afterwards admitted as genuine. The Revelation also by St. John, was for some time held apocryphal. It is not to be doubted however that every part of the New Testament, which we now hold of authority, was also acknowledged to be so, upon the truest information, by the first Christians, in no long time after it was given to the world.---All writers upon the subject, who are not bigoted followers of the Romish Church, agree that Popery was not established till several centuries after the appearance of Our Saviour. No one can say with the least truth, that it was established more than eleven or twelve hundred years

we find such things done again, (it matters not whether they are done through policy or bigotry) it is the part of every true Christian, and good member of society, to adopt those measures, which reason and religion will allow, to resist the growing evil.

* Revelation, chap. xvii. ver 9. † Ver. 18.

§ Vide, Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, lib. vi. cap. 25.

years ago. In the passages which I have quoted from the Epistles of St. Paul, and from the Revelation, we find as exact a description of Popery, as any one could write at this time. It must be a Christian power that St. Paul means, for he describes it, "as fitting in the temple of God." The whole as well as "the forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats," are such plain, such remarkable, and such singular features of the Roman Catholic Church, that it is impossible to mistake it for the description of any other church. The very place where this Anti-Christian power is to appear, is mentioned by St. John. "The seven mountains on which the woman sitteth," cannot but mean Rome. The Roman, as well as other authors, mean Rome, when they speak of the city of the seven mountains. Virgil*, speaking of Rome, says,

Septem urbs alta jugis toto quæ præfidet orbi.

Which now on sev'n high hills triumphant reigns,
And in that compass all the world contains.

DRYDEN.

It appears to me impossible for the utmost ingenuity of sophistry to evade the force of the argument

* Vide Georgics, at the concluding part of the second book.

ment that may from hence be urged in favor of the truth of Christianity. St. Paul and St. John * could not by chance have conjectured that such a power as they describe, would exist. The idea of such a power could only have been impressed upon their minds by the particular inspiration of God. For no such power had ever existed, and there was nothing from the appearance of things upon earth at the time they wrote, to make them conceive that such a power would ever exist. If they have uttered a prophecy then through the particular and extraordinary inspiration of heaven, there is reason to believe that Christianity is a divine Revelation. Moreover, it may be observed that, it is impossible that any one could have inserted this description of Popery after its appearance, into the Epistles of St. Paul, and into the Revelation, without a discovery of the fraud. There is no author I believe who has even suspected such a deception. And that the Epistles of St. Paul, which we hold of authority, were written by him, and the Revelation by St. John, is now as certain as that Sallust and Tacitus produced the histories which are attributed to them. That they wrote them in the first century, is also beyond

* Daniel also foretold the establishment of Popery. He speaks of a power, that "shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws." Chap. vii. ver. 25. And again, "And he shall exalt himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of Gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women." Chap. xi. ver. 36, 37.

beyond a doubt. I think it would be difficult to alledge more satisfactory proofs in favor of any truth. Though this reasoning is not as conclusive as mathematical demonstration, yet to a candid mind it must appear very little less.

I will now proceed to the most important point of all, the proof of the RESURRECTION of JESUS. This is the great corner stone through which we are to raise the noble fabric of a rational and firm belief. I hope therefore my reader will not lament my leading him into a long investigation of the matter. It is of infinite importance. If it is once settled, there is no occasion to dwell for any length of time, upon the other proofs of the truth of Christianity ; as it must be allowed by every person of sound understanding, if Jesus rose from the grave the third day after his burial, that Christianity is a Divine Revelation : For what reasonable man can imagine that God would raise, in a miraculous manner, the dead body of an impostor ?

It will easily be allowed by every one who can reason, if a person tells us he saw a certain thing, that if he did not see it, he was deceived himself when he told us so, or that he willingly deceived us. The Apostles declared that they saw Jesus their master, several times after he was crucified, and buried. If he did not appear to them, if it was not he, they were deceived themselves in thinking that they saw

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him

him, or they told others that they had seen him, when they did not imagine they had seen him, willingly to deceive them. In short, I think it will readily be granted, if any one denies the resurrection of Jesus after his burial, that, he must say the Apostles were deluded enthusiasts, or that they were impostors. Now it is my intent to shew that they were neither deluded enthusiasts, nor impostors; and therefore that Jesus did rise again after his burial. I will first prove that they were not deluded enthusiasts. It must be allowed that the evidence of his senses, is the best evidence that any one can obtain, for the truth of any matter. If he cannot be convinced by such evidence, we cannot conceive by what evidence he can be convinced. If a person sees a thing, and hears it, and feels it, he must be convinced that it really exists. The Apostles saw, and heard, and one of them handled Jesus, after his resurrection.

St. Matthew says *, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had seen the Angel of the Lord at the sepulchre, they ran to tell Jesus's disciples of it. " And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be
 " not

* Chap. xxviii. ver. 9, 10. and 16, 17-

“ not afraid : Go tell my brethren that they go in-
 “ to Galilee, and there shall they see me.----Then
 “ the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, unto
 “ a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And
 “ when they saw him, they worshipped him.”

St. Mark says *, (when Jesus had appeared to
 Mary Magdalene and to two of his disciples,)
 “ Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven as they
 “ sat at meat, and upbraided them with their un-
 “ belief and hardness of heart, because they be-
 “ lieved not them which had seen him after he was
 “ risen. And he said unto them, Go ye.”

St. Luke says †, (speaking of the two disciples
 to whom Jesus had appeared as they were going
 to Emmaus,) “ And they rose up the same hour
 “ and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven
 “ gathered together, and them that were with them,
 “ saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath ap-
 “ peared to Simon. And they told what things
 “ were done in the way, and how he was known
 “ of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus
 “ speak, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them,
 “ and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But
 “ they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed
 “ that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto
 “ them, Why are ye troubled ? and why do thoughts

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“ arise

* Chap. xvi. ver. 14, 15. † Chay. xxiv. ver, 33--45.

“ arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my
 “ feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see for
 “ a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me
 “ have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed
 “ them his hands and his feet. And while they yet
 “ believed not for joy and wondered, he said unto
 “ them, Have ye any meat? And they gave him
 “ a piece of a broiled fish and of an honey-comb.
 “ And he took it, and did eat before them. And
 “ he said unto them these are the words which---”.

St. John says *, “ Then the same day at even-
 “ ing, being the first day of the week, when the
 “ doors were shut where the disciples were assem-
 “ bled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood
 “ in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto
 “ you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto
 “ them his hands and his side. Then were the dis-
 “ ciples glad when they saw the Lord.---But Tho-
 “ mas one of the twelve called Didymus, was not
 “ with them when Jesus came. The other disciples
 “ therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.
 “ But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his
 “ hands the print of the nails, and put my finger
 “ into

* Chap. xx. ver. 19---26.-----I would recommend the reader to
 “ Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection
 “ of Jesus Christ, by Gilbert West, Esq;.” If he has ever been
 puzzled by objections against the History of the Resurrection of Je-
 sus, as it is related by the Evangelists, he will find in these Obser-
 vations a satisfactory answer to them.---They are judicious, learned,
 and elegant.

" into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand
 " into his side, I will not believe. And after eight
 " days again his disciples were within, and Thomas
 " with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being
 " shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be
 " unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither
 " thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hi-
 " ther thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and
 " be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas
 " answered and said unto him, my Lord and my
 " God."

I have not quoted all that the Evangelists * say
 upon the Resurrection of Jesus, as I think this fully
 sufficient to remove every doubt of the Apostles
 themselves being deceived in this matter, of their
 being deluded enthusiasts. If the Resurrection of
 Jesus was not a truth, they must have feigned a
 history of it, knowing it to be false. For the A-
 postles were so far from yielding easily to the belief
 of

* The author of the Acts says, (speaking of Jesus and the Apostles.)
 " To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many
 " infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of
 " the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts i. 3.

St. Peter says, " Him God raised up the third day, and shewed
 " him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen be-
 " fore God, even unto us who did eat and drink with him, after he
 " rose from the dead." Acts x. 40, 41.

St. Paul says, " But God raised him from the dead : and he was
 " seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to
 " Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people." Acts xiii,
 30, 31. And again, " He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve :
 " After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once."
 1 Epist. Corinth. xv. 5, 6.

of the resurrection of their master, that they would not only not believe Mary Magdalene, and the other women who told them of it, but they would not upon this matter believe one another. They required the most satisfactory evidence of their senses for its truth, the seeing and the hearing him, and one of them was totally averse to its belief, till, as well as seeing him and hearing him, he should thrust his hand into his side. In this matter there could be no delusion. Suppose a friend with whom I have been so intimate as to be almost daily in his company for three years or more, goes for some little time into another part of the country, and then returns. Is it possible I can be mistaken about his person, if I again see him several times, and if many others with whom he has been as intimate, say that it is he? Suppose we all see him eat and drink, and we converse with him upon several subjects, and suppose upon some of us having doubted the affirmation of others that they had seen him, he shews us some marks upon his body, by which he was *particularly distinguished*, must we not relinquish all pretensions to reason, if we do not believe that it is really our friend? Should not we all upon this have as good proof, and be as well convinced, that he was alive, as that we ourselves were? Is there any truth of which we could be more satisfactorily convinced than that he was alive, after he had acted in this manner?--But I will forbear--I am ashamed

in so clear a case to say more, than I can maintain that it is an absolute impossibility, that the Apostles were deceived in regard to the resurrection of their master, that is, that they were deluded enthusiasts. It is as absolute an impossibility, as that any thing can at the same time, exist, and not exist.---I suppose the greater part of those who deny the Resurrection of Jesus, will conceive that the Apostles were impostors, that is, that they pretended to have seen their master alive several days after his burial, when they knew they had not seen him. I shall therefore quit this part of the argument, and prove that it is morally impossible, (that is, improbable in the highest degree) that they were impostors ; which is the first kind of evidence a circumstance of this nature admits.

It will easily be granted, that, when a person invents and propagates a falsehood, he hopes, provided he is not a fool or a madman, that it will somehow or other contribute to his advantage or his pleasure. To invent and propagate a falsehood where the inventor is himself assured that it will bring him to ruin, to imprisonment, to infamy, to a cruel death, must indicate folly or madness in the extreme. And to impute either of these to the Apostles, would prove him who made the imputation to be possessed of no sound understanding. For the worst enemies of Christianity have been compelled, tho' reluctantly, to acknowledge the excellence of its morality. The
Apostles

Apostles in their writings, give every demonstration of a sober and a clear mind. Their stile and their doctrine is evidently grave, serious, and simple. The Apostles knew that the severest persecution would follow the publication of the resurrection of their master. They knew that Peter and John soon after their divulging it, were with threats commanded by a council of the Jews, that they should speak no more in his name *. They had a little while after seen one of their brethren stoned for avowing his zeal for their master †; and they knew that Herod soon after began to persecute them for preaching in his name; that he for this killed James the brother of John, and imprisoned Peter §. They were told by their master, as they themselves declare, to look forward to persecution and death for preaching the gospel. “ They shall deliver you “ up to be afflicted, and shall kill you ‡.”---“ They “ shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, “ delivering you up to the synagogues, and into “ prisons ||.”---“ If they have persecuted me, they “ will also persecute you ‡.”---“ They shall put you “ out of the synagogues : yea the time cometh that “ whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth “ God service §§.” It is impossible therefore that they could have invented, and have propagated the

* See Acts iv. 17, 18.

|| See Luke xxi. 12.

† See Acts vii. 59.

‡ See John xv. 20.

§ See Acts xii-2, 3, 4.

§§ See John xvi. 2.

‡ See Matth. xxiv. 9.

the report of the resurrection of their master without being fools or madmen, and that they were not so we appeal to the living evidence of their writings.

Moreover the Apostles themselves declared that they looked forward to persecution and death for preaching the gospel. St. Paul says, (and he tho' not one of the first Apostles was an eye-witness of Jesus's resurrection, and in this may be esteemed the mouth of his brethren) "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me." And again, "For I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed unto death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.---Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day *." From this we find there can be no ground whatever for urging that the Apostles might have expected some worldly advantages from propagating the gospel. It is too certain to be denied, or doubted, that they expected the persecution they received. And when they met with it, they bore

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* 1 Corinth. chap. iv. ver. 9--14.

it with chearfulness, and joy. The author of the Acts says, " And when they had called the Apostles " and beaten them, they commanded that they " should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let " them go. And they departed from the presence " of the council, rejoicing that they were counted " worthy to suffer shame for his sake *." And from this I think a very strong argument may be urged for the Apostles having known that what they asserted was a truth. For let me ask in the name of common sense, from what this chearfulness and this joy could have proceeded, but from the satisfaction of their consciences, and the expectation of a future reward, for performing what they knew to be their duty to God? Is it possible that any one, (except his mind is insane,) can be chearful for being punished and afflicted for the avowing of that which he knows to be altogether an unprofitable falsehood? What reward, if they knew that the story of the resurrection of their master was a falsehood, (and whether it was one or not they indisputably, must have known,) could they have expected as a recompense for the troubles they underwent?

We must observe also that it is improbable in the extreme that such men as the Apostles, who were fishermen and publicans, who were " unlearned and " ignorant men †." could have conceived so com-
pen-

* Acts v. 40, 41. † Acts chap. iv. ver. 13.

pendious and so great a design, as the introducing a new religion into the world which should overturn and extirpate every other. They were men of no natural courage which we should look for in the contrivers of such a scheme, but were rather of an irresolute temper. They themselves mention their desertion of their master, their denial of him, and their flight from him in the hour of his distress. It is not to be conceived with reason on our side, that any thing but the consciousness of truth, and a reliance on heaven flowing from that, could have supported them in this matter. For if what they asserted had been a falshood, they must naturally have expected that earth, and hell, and heaven, would have combined against them. They must have expected the most intemperate persecution from the Chief Priests and Rulers of the Jews, for they accused them of the most treacherous hypocrisy, and of the most flagrant murder. They must have expected that the lusts and passions of men, which they wished to subdue, or to check, would have combated against them for the publication of their doctrines. They must have expected that God himself would have poured his severest vengeance on them, for their continued invocation of him to witness a daring lie.

How is it possible, if the Apostles were impostors, if what they declared was a falshood, that they could so soon have introduced the gospel into the

world? In this the hand of heaven evidently appears. The rapid progress of Christianity is itself a miracle. Immediately after the inspiration of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, upon the preaching of Peter, three thousand persons were convinced by his arguments, and became Christians. "And the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls *." Soon after, "A great company of priests were obedient unto the faith †." And not a great while after there were myriads of Jews who believed. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands, (myriads,) of Jews there are which believe §." And here I expect that the reader who may not yet be convinced of the truth of the Apostles, will urge that this kind of evidence does not avail with him, as he does not admit the credibility of the witnesses. Such an evasion however will profit him nothing. For we can prove not only from the sacred writers, but from heathen authors, that Christianity prevailed upon the Apostles preaching it, not only in Judea, but at Rome; and in other parts of the world. It spread immediately upon their preaching it over a great part of the earth, as the fruitful Nile sometimes spreads over Egypt. Tacitus ‡ says, that in Nero's days, (who became

* Acts chap. ii. ver. 41. † Acts, chap. vi. ver. vii.

§ Acts, chap. xxi. ver. 22.

‡ He says of the Christians who were seized, (vide Annal. 15. cap. 44.) Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde Indicio eorum multi-

became Emperor twenty years after the death of Christ,) there was "a great multitude" of Christians at Rome, many of whom were burnt when the city had been set on fire. Suetonius * also mentions the increase of Christianity, in his Life of that Emperor. And Pliny † in a letter to the Emperor Trajan, writes, that the enquiry that had been entered upon, in order to prosecute those who were accused of Christianity, had extended to persons of all ranks, and ages, and of both sexes: which was not confined to the cities only, but had spread its infection, (as he pleases to call it) to the country villages. Lucian § says, that in the time of the Emperor Commodus, his native country of Pontus, was filled with Christians and Epicureans. It is to be observed that Christianity was thus early diffused over the Roman Empire, notwithstanding the violent persecutions which were raised against it, arising among other causes from a maxim which always prevailed among the Romans, that it was dangerous and subversive of the state || to admit of any innovation in public worship. Christianity increased

multitudo injens, haud perinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis, conjuncti sunt. It is reasonable therefore to suppose that the number of Christians in the city was extremely considerable, as many would glory in confessing themselves to be such, tho' they were sensible of the immediate danger which would attend the acknowledgement of their faith.

* Vide Suetonius in Nerone, cap. 16.

† Vide Pliny's Letter to Trajan, on the progress of Christianity.

§ In Alexandro, cap. 16.

|| Vide Livii Hist. lib. 39. cap. 16.---Valerius Maximus, lib. 1. cap. 3.

creased with the greatest rapidity in the Roman Empire with this great disadvantage to contend with, that it was thought the existence of the state required its extirpation : which could never have come to pass, if it had not been founded on truth : if it had not been the word of God.

If the report of the Apostles of the resurrection of their master had been false, it would have been very easy for the Chief Priests and Rulers of the Jews, to have proved its falsity to the world. If what they enjoined the Roman soldiers to say, had been true ; if his disciples had gone by night, and stolen away his body when they were asleep, (to steal which from a guard of soldiers, stationed at the very spot without alarming them, must appear to every attentive reader of the Evangelists, utterly impracticable, as the Chief Priests. had set a stone * at the door of the sepulchre, which they had sealed,) if they had done this, it would have been very easy for the Chief Priests to have sifted the whole matter to the bottom, and have given satisfactory proofs of

* The Chief Priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, saying, " Com-
mand therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day ;
" least his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto
" the people he is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be
" worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch : Go
" your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went and made
" the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."

Matth. chap. xxvii. ver. 64, 65, 66.

of the deception to all mankind. But we do not find that they took any such steps, zealous as they were to oppose the preaching of the Apostles.

If the Resurrection of Jesus did not happen, the Apostles must have entered into a plot, they must have agreed together in regard to the minute circumstances of the report that they should make to the world. How then could it be that not one among so many confederates in a fraud, or urged by conscience, or appalled by danger, or subdued by persecution, should have exposed the cheat, and disavowed his criminality? What cement, if it had been a plot, could have bound the confederacy? What could have given perseverance to twelve dishonest men, (for such in the extreme they must have been, if they had forged the story of their master's resurrection,) to continue in a falsehood which must appear even to themselves an unprofitable one? Is it not strange, is it to be believed, that twelve such persons should abide to such a falsehood during their lives, that they should maintain it in dying, and obtrude themselves with it in their mouths into the presence of their maker? And here I cannot forbear quoting the very words which the late ingenious and learned Dr. Zachary Pearce, uses upon this subject, (in his "Miracles of Jesus Vindicated") in answer to that weak and wild writer Woolston. He says, upon the Apostles unanimously asserting the fact of their master's resurrection
with

with their dying breath, and when * expiring under the cruelest tortures ; “ This is naturally as strong a proof, as a fact is capable of ; for death is the utmost trial, the surest test, which human nature can be exposed to. And it is no abatement to the force of this proof to say, that many cheats and criminals have asserted their innocence, and denied their guilt in the utmost extremity of death, for the two cases are so far from being parrallel, that they are exactly contrary ; such cheats and criminals being tempted to this denial of their guilt, by the hope of *saving* their lives ; whereas in the Apostle’s case, the only hope that they could have of *saving* their lives, was by owning the falsehood, (if it was one,) and acknowledging themselves to be guilty, which is just the reverse of what they did.”

And now I will express my rapturous joy that there are such strong unanswerable arguments in favor of the Resurrection of Our Saviour, (for I trust if we review this whole chain of reasoning it will appear complete and satisfactory,) by which it naturally follows that the dreary, chearless, idea of our annihilation is as false as it is horrible ;---we can prove by this that this frame will not become after death like the kneaded clod ; the tender parent

* All the Apostles, except John, sealed their testimony with their blood.

rent who is bowed to the earth through the loss of his beloved child, may raise his depressed head, as he may from hence be assured that he will again see the object upon which his eyes were wont to gaze with heart-felt joy, for we shall find, (as the poet * expresses it,)

--Man's majestic beauty bloom again,
Bright thro' th' eternal year of love's triumphant
reign.

* See the admirable Poem of the Minstrel, by Dr. Beattie.

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now who is bowed to the earth through the loss of
the beloved child. Now with his agonized head
he has found peace he affords the world again
the light of day which the eyes were wont to
see and breathe the air that his hand has
loved to breathe.

There is a mother's sorrow that is deeper than
any sorrow in the world. It is the sorrow of
a mother who has lost her child. It is the
sorrow of a mother who has lost her child.
It is the sorrow of a mother who has lost her child.
It is the sorrow of a mother who has lost her child.

THE
CHRISTIAN.

A POEM,
In FOUR BOOKS,

THE

CHRISTIAN

APPEAL

TO THE

ARCU

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ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

The POEM opens with reflecting on the vanity of Philosophy, and being delighted with the cheerful hope which the GOSPEL inspires of happiness in another state.---A cursory description of several schools of philosophers.---Of the first and second school of the EPICUREANS---of the Stoics---of the Platonists, or followers of PLATO---of the Academics---of the Lyceum, and of ARISTOTLE----of CICERO.----Of the modern Sceptics who have been averse to the principles of the Gospel-----Of HOBBS----of BOLINGBROKE---of VOLTAIRE---of HUME---of the disservice they have done to society.---Of the aim of CHRISTIANITY---It gives all the sound doctrines of the various schools of philosophy, without any of their errors.---It restrains, or subdues, the dangerous passions

A R G U M E N T.

passions of Ambition, Lust, Pride, Avarice, Revenge.---It inspires us with more than Roman fortitude.---Some Roman heroes mentioned---The otherwise splendid character, but the cowardly, and base death of CATO---The necessity for the better understanding the principles of CHRISTIANITY, to attend to the Life of the great Author of our Faith.----The awfulness of investigating his character, and viewing him in his inhuman death,

T H E

B O O K the F I R S T.

N O more by vain Philosophy misled,
From erring Reason or from Fancy bred ;
Vague and desultory, no more the mind,
In ancient schools conviction roams to find ;
But in its aim determin'd, and without 5
The Sophist's cavil, or the Sceptic's doubt,
Upon the G O S P E L fixes as a rock,
Where fears depress not, nor afflictions shock.
Which of perennial comfort can impart,
In boundless measure, to the troubled heart : 10
For Hope, that soars on more than eagle's wings,
Above this Vale of Tears, these paltry things,
That all around us give themselves to fight ;
Above the sun, and his expanded light ;
O'er all these fading things that dares to rise, 15
Seeks life immortal, and affects the skies ;
Proceeds from this ; which reason cannot deem,
A cunning fable, or an empty dream ;
But it will seem, will prove, as we descant,
Clear as a sun-beam, firm as adamant. 20

No more enquiring roams th' unsettled mind,
 Among the learn'd Athenians truth to find :
 No more attentive can it dwell on aught,
 To his first school that EPICURUS taught ;
 Who fancy'd gods that thoughtless pleasure lov'd, 25
 Far from the providence of man remov'd ;
 And therefore held man's happiness must be,
 In the same profitless tranquillity ;
 And thought of this short life the feverish dream,
 Of his existence was the poor extreme. 30
 And e'en than theirs still less can I affect,
 The odious tenets of the latter sect,
 Who learnt from them their speculative lore
 But from their useful temperance forbore,
 Those vile and grov'ling Sensualists, who waste 35
 The labor of the mind, to please the taste ;
 Effem'nate, by no hardy virtue fir'd ;
 In the low pleasures of a brute bemir'd.
 Nor can I now, since higher themes inspire
 My glowing breast, as I was wont, admire, 40
 The rugged Stoic, whose congealed mind,
 Nor accident, nor passion, could unbind ;
 Who joy, or grief, alike disdain'd, to know,
 Lament his own, or melt at others woe,

Yet

Yet blended temp'rance, with a noble pride, 45
 And fortitude, with patriotifm, allied :
 Or visionary Platonift, with fchemes
 Of idle import, and fantaftic dreams ;
 Tho' oft, from well-urg'd arguments, he draws,
 Bright truths, relating to the great firft caufe : 50
 Or Academic, with a flimfy mind,
 Now to this fchool, and now to that, inclin'd, }
 As veering, and as unftubstantial, as the mind. }
 And fatisfied of truth, I wifh no more,
 The fam'd Lyceum's docttrines, to explore ; 55
 Tho' ever and anon, ſhe cafts a light,
 On the learn'd page, of the fhrewd Stagyrte.
 Nor now conviction do I feek to find,
 From the deep fearch, of TULLY's vig'rous mind ;
 (With whom, at Tufculum's ferene retreat, 60
 Enquiring fages, oft were wont to meet ;)
 For this, the more it is difcufs'd, I know,
 From vain philofophy, can never flow.
 Some truths, among its errors, lie confus'd ;
 As if they were by accident diffus'd ; 65
 But ftill in all its fyftems, we can meet,
 No fcheme, confiftent, regular, complete.
 For its imperfect or corrupted lore,
 (Tho' glafs'd with eloquence elab'rate o'er,)

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Who

Who quits the mercy-breathing GOSPEL'S rule ; 70
 Quits truth, for dang'rous error ;---as a fool,
 The constant light of faithful heav'n, he leaves,
 For a false fire of earth, a vapor that deceives.

If the philosophy of antient schools,
 For life's just conduct cannot give the rules ; 75
 From these, if no conviction we receive ;
 That comfort, less the modern Sceptics give :
 Who to the GOSPEL'S purity averse,
 Frame other systems hateful, and perverse.
 Such was bewilder'd HOBBS, who idly strove, 80
 'Twixt right, and wrong, no nat'ral line to prove :
 Or BOLINGBROKE fallacious, who denies,
 Of just morality, the sacred ties,
 And tho' he grants the Being of a God,
 Yet he his genial Prov'dence disallow'd ; 85
 Like CATALINE, endued, with little sense,
 Tho' grac'd with all the pow'rs of eloquence,
 And less will Reason give her sober ear,
 To flimsy, faithless, profligate, VOLTAIRE :

And

Line 82. It is said, that ADDISON used emphatically to call this nobleman, who was the High-priest of immorality, falsehood, and profaneness,) " The canker'd BOLINGBROKE."

And less the dang'rous sophistries, assume, 90
 The baleful principles, of putrid HUME;
 Who wish'd JEHOVAN, from his throne, to tear,
 And his vain idol Chance, to settle there.

H 2

From

Line 90, &c. I cannot forbear subscribing a note, that I may add somewhat more towards descrying the works of a man, which upon the whole are of such a destructive tendency, as to render it the part of every lover of human nature, who is acquainted with them, to endeavour to prevent the propagation of them. It must be allowed that Mr. HUME in his Essay "on a Providence and a Future State," wishes to controvert the belief of the existence of the Deity. He says, "In a word I much doubt whether it be possible for a cause to
 "be known only by its effect (as you have all along supposed) or to
 "be of so singular and particular a nature as to have no parallel and
 "no similitude with any other cause or object, that has ever fallen
 "under our observation. It is only when two SPECIES of objects
 "are found to be constantly conjoined that we can infer the one from
 "the other; and were an effect presented, which was entirely singular, and could not be comprehended under any known SPECIES,
 "I do not see that we could form any conjecture or inference concerning its cause." He means by this, that the universe, which he calls "an effect quite singular and unparalleled," is not a proof of a first cause, of the DEITY. In another Essay he says, "Honesty
 "is certainly in general the best policy, but a wise man will make
 "exceptions to the rule." In short Mr. HUME would have been glad to have made us believe that there is no GOD, and that it is sometimes the part of a wise man to be a rogue. Execrable, flagitious, assertions!--If most of this author's essays had not been exposed to the just detestation of mankind, by some writers whose productions are an honor to the present age, the profligacy of the world would have been so heightened by them, that they would considerably have increased the number of public executions. I would recommend my reader to the fifth section, of the first part, of the celebrated, "Essay on
 "the

From these what mischiefs, have aris'n to man !
 Of virtue, and of happiness, the bane ! 95
 How their accurst contagion, have they spread !
 Which is more horrid, than that pest'lence dread,
 That over thee, Byzantium ! oft doth rear,
 Its livid banners, in the tainted air,
 And stalks, by fierce destruction, lacquey'd, and }
 despair. 100

And

" the Nature and Immutability of Truth," (which is only exceptionable, perhaps in the unguarded praise it bestows upon Mr. HUME's insidious history) for the clearest confutation of this vile cavil which Mr. HUME has made against the existence of the Supreme Being, that was ever made of any absurdity whatever. Dr. BEATTIE says, among other excellent things in answer to it: " The singularity of " the effect rather confirms (if that be possible) than weakens our belief of the necessity of a cause ; at least it makes us more attentive to the cause ; and interests us more deeply in it. What is the " universe, but a vast system of works, or effects, some of them " great, and others small ; some more and some less considerable ? " If each of these works, the least as well as the greatest, require a " cause for its production ; is it not in the highest degree absurd and " unnatural to say that the whole is not the effect of a cause ? Each " link of a great chain must be supported by something, but the " whole chain may be supported by nothing. Nothing less than an " ounce can be a counterpoise to an ounce, nothing less than a " pound to a pound : but the wing of a gnat or nothing at all may " be a sufficient counterpoise to ten hundred thousand pounds :-- " Are not these assertions too absurd to deserve an answer ? " --As for the other proposition of Mr. Hume, I cannot insult my reader's heart by recommending him to any answer to it,

And what is this auspicious GOSPEL's aim?
 What undiscover'd truths does it proclaim?
 It clears the doubt of immortality,
 From which philosophy, was never free;
 And which, at times obtrusive, would molest, 105
 The expectations, e'en of TULLY's breast.
 Convinces us the soul will never die,
 From which conviction springs a constant joy;
 Gives the sound doctrines of the various schools,
 Without their foolish or pernicious rules; 110
 And adds some better and sublimer lore,
 Than e'er philosophy had given before;
 It seeks to form upon the justest plan,
 The temper, conduct, and the hope of man;
 And while it fills his heart, with highest aims, 115
 His weakness strengthens, and his fierceness tames;
 Makes him undaunted, his resolve maintain,
 Unconquer'd, or by pleasure, or by pain;
 And polishes, his harsh asperity,
 To mansuetude, and gentle courtesy. 120
 Each manly gen'rous virtue 'twill impart,
 And draw out all the venom from the heart.
 But most to mild benevolence 'twill move,
 And melt the steel'd obdurate mind to love.

Lo!

Lo! as we read, what new, unknown controul! 125

What sacred energy, affails the soul!

We seem to feel an impulse that's divine,

'Tis GOD himself, that breathes from ev'ry line:

Curb'd, or subdued, our madding passions stand,

And own the force of an almighty hand. 130

Ambition, burning with a feverish rage,

Learns hence its dang'rous turbulence t'assuage;

And rabid lust, with fires unholy fraught,

Is check'd, or e'er it rises into thought;

It melts the heart which unrelenting pride, 135

Or ruthless avarice, had petrified;

Revenge, that pants for mischief, or for blood,

That breathes out threat'nings, in his ireful mood,

And wildly scorning Reason's soft controul,

Blazes, a conflagration of the soul; 140

Or broods delib'rate o'er its purpose fell,

And in its breast keeps down the smother'd hell,

That there in secret agony it bears;

Implacable, by penitence, or tears;

Lo! in obedience to th' all-powerful word, 145

Resigns each merc'less thought, and drops the thirsty

sword.

Unmanly fear, with abject thoughts deprest,

To courage, brightens his aspiring crest;

And

And fortitude, the truest fortitude,
 With more than stoic steadiness endued, 150
 Firm, patient, calm, determin'd, and resign'd,
 Spreads her impervious shield around the mind.
 In pain, and danger, hence, undaunted be,
 And tread upon the Roman constancy :
 And be, than all their vaunted heroes more, 155
 Above their history, their fable soar.
 Tho' some, but few, to deathless praise aspir'd,
 With ardent love of sacred virtue fir'd :
 As REGULUS, a great illustrious name ;
 And the dictator, of immortal fame ; 160
 With firm FABRICIUS, temperate, and wise,
 Whose elevated mind, could wealth despise ;
 And I will grant, insensible to fear,
 By freedom fir'd, the people's mad career,
 And an usurping traitor's lust of pow'r, 165
 Conspicuous and unshaken ;---like a tow'r ;---
 CATO, sometime with noble zeal withstood,
 Collected in himself, and obstinately good.
 But like a coward boy, at last he died,
 A willing sacrifice, to fullen pride. 170
 By one rash act, his mighty name profan'd,
 And wither'd every laurel he had gain'd.

O, had these doctrines touch'd, inspir'd, his mind,
 The tyrant's rage he would have met resign'd,
 Like Teneriffe unmov'd, he would have stood, 175
 And brav'd the storm, and the descending flood,
 And tho' fate all her gloomy terrors hurl'd,
 Have liv'd, and smil'd, at grief, at CÆSAR, and the
 world !

But let us, with the temper that is meet,
 With humble awe affectionate, replete, 180
 The more this joyful GOSPEL to display,
 Its heaven-sprung author's holy life survey.
 He, when the great progenitors of man
 Had faln from blis thro' their delusions vain,
 By which their whole unhappy future race 185
 Would have been banish'd from their maker's grace,
 Altho' the first in his great father's love,
 And all the arch-angelic pow'rs above,
 Yet freely chose to die for their offence,
 Thro' the excess of his benevolence. 190

Superior

Line 186 and 7. I would recommend my reader to some valuable letters upon this subject, from Sir ISAAC NEWTON to LE-CLERC. Every comment or observation of this illustrious man, upon the Scriptures, must be worth the greatest attention ; for it is the opinion of those of the best learning, that he was as superior to the rest of mankind in this branch of knowledge, as he was in every other.

Superior spirits, with amazement mov'd,
 The dear intent, in highest praise approv'd,
 Which by blest voices was harmonious sung,
 And heav'n with loudest HALLELUJAHS rung.
 His life, as an example, was applied ; 195
 A *willing* sacrifice, for sin he died.
 Forbear then, Sceptic, insolent, as vain,
 For this, eternal justice to arraign :
 For what spontaneously he chose to do,
 It could not be injustice to allow. 200
 Nor weakly think, if thy obdurate soul,
 No gen'rous love can soften or controul,
 That some great spirits, for the public good,
 Will not with chearfulness, resign their blood,
 Whose souls sublime, e'en when with pain oppress'd,
 Feel blifs, if conscious, 'twill make others blest.

But how this life mysterious shall we scan ?
 How trace the wond'rous steps of God and man ?
 How view him, in th' inhuman death he bore,
 To nature subject, with dominion o'er ? 210

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

ARGUMENT

OF THE

SECOND BOOK.

INVOCATION of the heavenly MUSE.---The humble birth of OUR SAVIOUR.---His poverty a proof of the disregard that heaven has for riches and success.---The propriety of considering his Moral Character, as it may excite to imitation. His Piety first considered, as it was the vital principle that animated his conduct.--His regular and inflexible exertion of that virtue.---The necessity of that virtue for constituting a truly great character.---The reasonableness of it.---Solemn address to, and praise of the DEITY himself.---OUR SAVIOUR'S Humanity next considered, as this virtue must naturally spring from true piety. Without it, piety is vain, or an insult to GOD.---OUR SAVIOUR'S curing the blind, dumb, lame, maniac, leper, and lunatic.---His feeding thousands

ARGUMENT.

sands with a few fishes, and a little bread.---His weeping from sympathy, when he heard of the death of LAZARUS from his friends.----Great souls are liable to be melted.---Little and contracted minds are obdurate.---Praise of a feeling mind--It is a moral security of innocence--When however compassion is swayed by reason, is exerted from approbation, and from choice, as it was by OUR SAVIOUR, it is the highest virtue.--- Compassion was implanted in the breast of man, that, he might become by its display, the proxy of heaven.

BOOK the SECOND.

O deign, URANIA, as it rolls along,
To aid the sacred labor of my song!
Thou faintly, heav'n-born maid, that dost impart,
Thy gifts to none but to the upright heart;
That but the pure vouchsafest to inspire, 215
With thy chaste impulse, and thy hallow'd fire!
Thou that from guilt and discord fl'ist away,
And scorn'st to wreath the blood-stain'd sword with
bay!

Without or grace, or splendor, to adorn,
In the low vale of humble life was born, 220
As prescient seers declar'd th' eternal plan,
The blest Redeemer of degraded man.
To manifest what heav'n of wealth esteems,
How low, how little, fortune's sons it deems,
He bore himself the mere extremity, 225
Of barren, and uncheerful poverty;
For oft the day devoid of food he led,
And many a night unhoused was his head.

But

But let us, 'tis what we should most revere,
 Expatiate on his Moral Character : 230
 While his example teaches us to live,
 'Twill wonder raise, and resolution give,
 Our native ingenuity refine,
 And charm, as animate, to worth divine.

And first, we will his Piety admire, 235
 Which may our breasts with sacred warmth inspire.
 'Twas rais'd by a becoming dignity,
 'Twas manly, animated, gen'rous, free ;
 No languid homage to a tyrant paid,
 With coldness thank'd, reluctantly obey'd ; 240
 But teem'd with praise and resignation meet,
 Sublime, tho' temp'rate, fervent, tho' discreet ;
 'Twas built on reason, and by reason sway'd,
 In every fortune equally display'd.
 Of ardent zeal for the esteem of God, 245
 Continual and daily proofs he shew'd.
 To this high purpose he his conduct bent,
 On this for ever pleasingly intent ;
 It was his meat, obsequious to fulfill,
 Without repining, his great father's will ; 250
 'Twas the delight, refreshment of his soul,
 Which was more heav'nly sweet, than any foul,

Than

Than any fleeting, treach'rous joy, could be,
 Of low, debasing, sensuality.
 With what a full command he could divest, 255
 The wild rebellious passions from the breast,
 Appears in all the horrid misery,
 Of his severe, stupendous, agony :
 When nature shock'd, a strong reluctance shew'd,
 At that affrightful, and oppressive load, 260
 Of griefs, which were appointed to be borne,
 A cruel death, with still more cruel scorn.
 Yet there, e'en there, inflexibly resign'd,
 He still preserves his constancy of mind,
 And humbly says, " O Father ! I will pray, 265
 " That thou would'st take this bitter cup away :
 " If it is possible, O be it done !
 " But be thy will perform'd, and not my own."

OUR SAVIOUR'S Piety, is first approv'd,
 As 'twas the vital principle that mov'd, 270
 His mind to action, and as this we deem
 Of all our obligations the supreme.
 Yet some there are who of its merit doubt,
 Or think true greatness may exist without.
 For other virtues it may merit praise ; 275
 Yet but a partial dignity can raise ;

For

For of this virtue the defect, at least
 Must tarnish, or obnubilate the rest.
 For it is nat'ral merit to revere,
 E'en in a low, imperfect character? 280

Can we be struck with goodness that's confin'd,
 And not transported our affections find,
 By boundless goodness, in th' eternal mind? }

Or how can we of gratitude approve,
 And not be grateful to the source of love? 285

Such conduct in essentials, wrong must be,
 And has nor fitness, nor consistency.

For what is piety, but warm esteem,
 And love, and gratitude, to the Supreme?

If these to man, are needful duties thought, 290

Can they be held, as trifling, or as nought,

To the great perfect author of all good,

Who claims our highest love, respect and gratitude?

O thou most worthy to be prais'd, ador'd,
 Eternal, boundless, universal LORD! 295

Who

Line 295. The description of the Deity in Revelation is particularly noble and sublime: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the LORD, which is, and which was, and which is to come,---the Almighty." (Vide chap. i. ver. 8.)

Who as a curtain stretch'd the heavens forth;
 Who took, and upon nothing, hung the earth;
 And to the wide tumultuous ocean said,
 Here, shalt thou come! here, thy proud waves be
 stay'd!

In highest heav'n who keep'st thy chief abode; 300
 From everlasting, t'everlasting, God;

As with a garment cloath'd around with light,
 In dazzling majesty, severely bright;
 The awful splendors of whose throne display,
 To eyes of Seraphim, resistless day; 305

Thou sendest rapid lightnings thro' the air,
 They go, and say unto thee, here we are.

Who can hold back thy all-commanding hand?

Who the fierce thunder of thy force withstand?

Heav'n's pillars tremble at thy dread reproof, 310

Astonish'd at th' insufferable pow'r aloof.

Where can I go, from thy all-searching eye?

And whither, whither, from thy spirit fly?

If I should take th' excursive wings of morn,

And to the sea's remotest bounds be borne, 315

There I should meet thy unconfin'd command,

Urg'd by thy pow'r, and, guided by thy hand.

If up to highest heav'n, I could ascend,

Or down to lowest hell, my footsteps bend;

In highest heav'n, or lowest hell, where'er
 I bent my footsteps, I should find thee there.
 No darkness is impervious to thy sight,
 But shews me to thee, like the broadest light.
 Thy eyes run to and fro the earth to find,
 That thou may'st guard, who bears a virtuous
 mind: 325

I'll cleanse my heart to win thee to abide,
 As a gigantic champion at my side.
 'Gainst vice with terror tho' thou art endued,
 Yet thou art full of mercy to the good.
 Can the meek, love-sway'd, mother ere forget, 330
 Or can she persecute with ruthless hate,
 The cherub-featur'd fav'rite, whom she bred,
 Rear'd in her arms, and with her bosom fed?
 Yes, the meek, love-sway'd, mother can forget,
 And she can persecute with ruthless hate. 335

The cherub-featur'd fav'rite, whom she bred,
 Rear'd in her arms, and with her bosom fed.
 But thou wilt never thy own sons neglect,
 But thou wilt never cease the righteous to protect.
 The sea, the earth, in wisdom thou hast made, 340
 Which creeping things innumerable tread,
 They call upon thee for their daily food,
 Thy hand thou op'nest, they are fill'd with good.

While

While I have being I will speak thy praise,
 In that my voice triumphantly i'll raise. 345
 From reas'ning of OUR SAVIOUR'S Piety,
 We will contemplate his Humanity:
 As of our Maker the unfeigned love,
 To love of man will naturally move;
 To all his creatures kindness it inspires, 350
 Whose happiness he zealously desires;
 And these two virtues must together reign;
 At least the first without the latter's vain;
 For he who malice in his bosom bears,
 Insults the God of Mercy by his pray'rs.--- 355
 His life's employ, the labor of his mind,
 Was to relieve, and benefit mankind,
 Where'er he went, affliction, and disease,
 Fled, and to them succeeded joy, and ease.
 The blind, dumb, lame, and each imperfect man,
 Felt second life, and saw, spoke, leap'd, or ran.

K 2

And

Line 358, &c. It is well known that the most intemperate enemies to Christianity, such as CELSUS and JULIAN, acknowledged that OUR SAVIOUR healed the lame, gave sight to the blind, &c. [which is also acknowledged by the authors of the Jewish Talmud,] but they attribute his doing so to Magic, or other idle causes. (Vide GROTIUS de veritate Christianæ Religionis: lib. 2, chap. 5.) TERTULLIAN and EUSEBIUS affirm that PILATE wrote an account to TIBERIUS of OUR SAVIOUR'S Miracles.

And thro' his unconfin'd munificence,
 The furious maniac soften'd into sense,
 Th' unhappy leper, that was whiten'd o'er,
 With an afflictive and a noisome sore, 365
 Loath'd by himself, and by his neighbour fled,
 He cleans'd, and free from all defilement made.
 The lunatic, poor wretch, was in the way,
 The jest of brutal fools, the villain's prey;
 The restless heavings of whose tortur'd heart, 370
 Would make him oft to a wild horror start.
 But at his touch, the frenzy disappear'd,
 The spirit fled him, and his senses clear'd.
 Thus, (if 'tis right, to liken and set forth
 The greatest things by those of trivial worth,) 375
 When an excelling artist's cunning hand,
 An harp, egregious source of joy, has scan'd,
 Whose rugged sounds gave no delight to hear,
 Uncouth, harsh, jangled, grating on the ear;
 As o'er the chords his learned fingers fly, 110
 Rough discord melts to truest harmony,
 And all th' enchanting notes of dulcet melody. }

And when the people moved by his fame,
 With all their sick to his retirement came;

And

And staid enwrapt in wonder and in thought, 385
 Till they were helpless as the sick they brought;
 He pitied them, and empty thousands fed,
 With a few fishes, and a little bread.
 O vast delight ! O feast of extasy !
 How 'bove compare to trivial joy to see 390
 Thus his lov'd flock, the heav'nly shepherd fed,
 And smile serenely in the gracious deed !
 O wonderful ! O envied happiness !
 But wherefore envied ? Does he never bless ?
 Does he not o'er our temp'rate meals preside ? 395
 Our chearful hours, our harmless pleasures guide ?

And add to this that in his life we find,
 A bright example of the tend'rest mind,
 The sympathy of gen'rous friendship most refin'd. }
 For as the friends of LAZARUS, distressed 400
 At his decease, their loss in tears confest ;
 His soul soon took th' impresson of their grief,
 He wept, tho' conscous that he brought relief ;
 Tho' conscous that he purpos'd to restore,
 Their friend to life by his mirac'lous pow'r ; 405
 He wept not therefore that their friend was dead,
 But a soft sympathizing tear he shed

At

At their affliction, for his feeling heart,
 In sighs of others always bore a part.
 From whence we learn the tear that gently flows,
 In kind compassion to another's woes,
 A spirit indicates sublime and great,
 And is of highest characters a brilliant trait.
 Hard, is the little, and contracted, mind,
 Great souls, melt easily, relent, are kind. 420
 To be dissolv'd in pity's tender care,
 Makes man superior e'en to man appear ;
 But to be melted with the charms of sense,
 T'immortal reason is a gross offence ;
 And sinks him than the bestial herd more low, 425
 Who were not fram'd sublimer joys to know.
 And sweet Compassion, tho' at first it grieves,
 Yet in reward a heav'nly pleasure leaves ;
 But he who rolls in luxury, soon mourns
 Its bed of roses, as a bed of thorns. 430

By nature some are pow'rfully inclin'd,
 To be benevolent, bounteous, and kind.
 And this propensity should be esteem'd
 A signal priv'lege, a great blessing deem'd.
 And we may properly deduce from thence, 435
 A moral certainty of innocence ;

For

For he who can for other's mis'ry grieve,
 Will but unwillingly that mis'ry give :
 In such a foil the virtues rudely grow,
 And all luxuriant love's sweet blossoms blow. 440
 But when compassion is by reason sway'd,
 From approbation, and from choice, display'd ;
 When as a branch of moral rectitude,
 As a great law of God it is pursued ;
 'Twill be a virtue of the highest kind, 445
 Such as it was in our great master's mind.
 Like his correct example it will be,
 Disinterested, warm, diffusive, free ;
 Devoid of weakness, a most tender soul,
 And generous beyond the least controul : 450
 The disposition will be unconfin'd,
 And its exertions useful to mankind :
 Nor the true ends of heav'nly mercy break,
 And private favors, public inj'ries make.
 Dove-ey'd compassion ! fair, celestial theme ! 455
 God's lov'liest attribute ! delight supreme !
 For when his pow'r almighty call'd to birth,
 This spangled firmament, this smiling earth ;
 When he its boundaries extensive span'd,
 Meeting the waters in his hollow hand ; 460
 Thou

Thou sat'st with him upon his saphire throne,
 Thou art his essence; thou art all his own;
 And when he made, he knew that he should spare,
 And from th' extreme of justice should forbear.
 Where'er much-blest, thy spirit soft pervades, 465
 Where'er thy mild, and genial influence spreads,
 Which is yet sweeter than the balmy wing,
 Of kind Favonius that leads in the spring,
 Discord, and pain, and unrelenting war,
 With all her brood of evils, flies afar; 470
 But love succeeds, with ev'ry grace to please,
 With gentle sympathy, and placid ease.
 O check not thou, my son, this tender sense,
 Of heart-dissolving, soft, benevolence:
 Tho' mild, the dang'rous passions 'twill controul,
 And for celestial joys refine thy soul.
 It is of grief the medicinal cure;
 The orphan's hope; the refuge of the poor;
 For the sublimest purpose it was giv'n,
 To make thee proxy to indulgent heav'n. 480

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

ARGU-

A R G U M E N T

O F T H E

T H I R D B O O K.

Further INVOCATION of the heavenly MUSE.---

Though OUR SAVIOUR appeared truly great,
and like a God, when he distributed Health and
Peace---yet his benevolence had a higher aim---

He meant to advance the eternal happiness of
man, by teaching him the most important and
salutary truths---He applied his life to this pur-
pose, and at last died a martyr for the good of
all mankind.---The Sermon on the Mount---The
excellence of its doctrine---The comfort which
arises from following them---The misery which
attends the neglecting them.--OUR SAVIOUR was
averse to persecution for difference of opinion in
religious matters---where the two disciples wished
him to call fire from heaven to blast the Samari-
tans, who were schismatics, and apostates, he
mildly refuses, and corrects their indiscretion.--

L

Address

ARGUMENT.

Address to intemperate, and sanguinary bigots, and to the Church of Rome--The virtues of OUR SAVIOUR'S Mind---His regular discretion---He avoided the persecution of a foe where fair conscience would allow, but where the interest of society required it, he exposed the vices of those in power---He reproaches the Scribes and Pharisees He satirizes HEROD.---As he is going to Jerusalem, he foretells the siege, and the destruction of it--Her enemies shall cast a trench around it when her children are within it---shall keep them in on every side---and shall not leave one stone upon another, (Luke, ch. xix. v. 41, 2, 3, 4.)---The extacy of the multitude upon his entrance---He enters, as it was foretold by the Prophet, (Zech. chap. ix. ver. 9, 10)---The Rulers of Jerusalem who looked for a temporal Messiah, are disgusted with him---One of his disciples, through avarice, betrays him.---Reflection on the love of money. The insults that are offered to him.---His Crucifixion, and the attendant circumstances--Affectionate, and grateful, observations, upon him.

BOOK the THIRD.

O Pow'r divine, withdraw not yet thine aid!
Serene, contemplative, seraphic, maid!
I still, thy influence auspicious, ask,
For not completed is my holy task.

Tho' great, magnanimous, and like a God, 485
OUR SAVIOUR did appear, when he bestow'd
Fair Health, and Peace, in distribution free,
With all the tenderness of soft humanity;
Yet his compassion had a higher reach,
The best and most important truths to teach; 490
The bad and stubborn to reform he meant;
To guide the stray'd, instruct the ignorant;
And universal virtue to increase,
From which, might flow man's everlasting peace.
For this, severest toils he underwent; 495
To this, he all his sacred studies bent;
To this great theme, he all his life applied,
Fearless of danger, and for this he died:

He died, with more than an heroic mind,
 A martyr for the good of all mankind. 500
 And thus that true benevolence of soul,
 Which while he liv'd, no troubles could controul;
 Which no ingratitude, could ere repress;
 (For souls sublime, are happy still to bless,
 Tho' the oblig'd are barren of return, 505
 Or with contemptuous pride, the giver spurn,)
 Which not the greatest inj'ries could abate;
 The most unmerited, and bitt'rest hate;
 Was to the heighth of fair perfection borne,
 Of a disgraceful death, by the triumphant scorn. 510
 When from the mount the multitude he taught,
 Was not each word, with truest wisdom, fraught?
 Did ever man, proclaim such things before?
 Was ever uttered such celestial lore?
 How mild, and how affectionately bland! 515
 How simply, how majestically grand!
 What just, what pure, what beneficial sense!
 What gentle, but resistless, eloquence!
 'Tis like the dew of Hermon, wont to still,
 Its balmy virtue upon Sion Hill. 520
 'Tis to th' o'er-labor'd, like soft sleep, or rest,
 Like cooling water, to the thirst-oppress.

To them, these holy precepts who pursue,
 The sweetest satisfaction, will ensue;
 But they who their benev'lent spirit, scorn, 525
 By the keen darts of anguish shall be torn,
 Shall rage, in wild, or in forlorn, despair, shall
 mourn.

Tho' he delighted to persuade the mind,
 He never violence to reason join'd;
 He bore no zeal with persecution fierce, 530
 From ev'ry deed of cruelty averse;
 And when his two disciples flush'd with ire,
 Wish'd him to blast with heav'n's avenging fire,
 Th' ungenerous, Samaritans, and rude,
 Who from their city would his steps detrude, 535
 For that he meant, (from whence their hatred grew)
 His journey to Jerus'lem to pursue:
 These, tho' they schismatics, apostates, were,
 Yet would he not to punishment confer;
 And uninflam'd this soft reply he gave, 540
 "I am not come t'extirpate, but to save."
 Ah lovely meekness! ah! endearing word!
 Worthy the son of heav'n's benev'lent lord!
 Which ev'ry Christian with elab'rate art,
 Should grave upon the living tablet of the heart. 545

Learn

Learn hence, ye bigots, who the world perplex
With doubts, with creeds sophistigated vex!

By

Line 546, &c. &c. I cannot forbear quoting a passage (that we may entertain just notions of Toleration) from Mr. LOCKE's Essay on Toleration, which is full of that strong and nervous sense for which that great philosopher was eminent.

" I say no opinions contrary to human society, or to those moral
" rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society, are to
" be tolerated by the magistrate. But of these, indeed, examples in
" any church are rare: for no sect can easily arrive to such a degree
" of madness, as that it should think fit to teach for doctrines of reli-
" gion such things as manifestly undermine the foundations of society
" and are therefore condemned by the judgement of mankind; be-
" cause their own interest, peace, reputation, every thing would
" be thereby endangered.

" Another more secret evil but more dangerous to the common-
" wealth, is, when men arrogate to themselves and to those of their
" own sect some peculiar prerogative covered over with a specious
" shew of deceitful words, but in effect opposite to the civil right of
" the community. For example: we cannot find any sect that teaches
" expressly and openly that men are not obliged to keep their promise;
" that princes may be dethroned by those who differ from them in
" religion; or that the dominion of things belongs only to themselves.
" For these things proposed thus nakedly and plainly would soon
" draw on them the eye and hand of the magistrate. and awaken all
" the care of the common-wealth to a watchfulness against the spread-
" ing of so dangerous an evil. But nevertheless we find those who
" say the same things in other words. What else do they mean who
" teach 'that faith is not to be kept with heretics?' Their meaning
" forsooth is that the privilege of breaking faith belongs only to
" themselves: for they declare that all that are not of their commu-
" nion to be heretics, or at least may declare them so whenever they
" think fit. What can be the meaning of their asserting 'that Kings
" excom-

By threats who silence, and unite by force ;
 And when you can't convince th' opponent, curse ;
 O'er those who to your dogma's will not yield, 550
 In rage th' exterminating sword who wield :
 Learn, CHRIST disclaims you, tho' his name ye bear,
 For tho' fierce wolves, the lamb's soft dress, ye wear.
 And learn, thou Rome! thou blood-stain'd prostitute!
 With murders, desolations, all pollute ? 555
 Thou nurse of vain and curst idolatry !
 Thy faith to CHRIST is blackest blasphemy !
 Whose gentle Gospel it contrasts as far,
 As nature of antipathy can bear,

As

" excommunicated forfeit their crowns and kingdoms ?" It is evident
 " that they thereby arrogate to themselves the power of deposing
 " kings : because they challenge the power of excommunication as
 " the peculiar right of their hierarchy. ' That dominion is founded
 " on grace' is also an assertion by which those that maintain it do
 " plainly claim the possession of all things. For they are not so want-
 " ing to themselves as not to believe, or at least as not to profess
 " themselves to be truly pious and faithful. These therefore who at-
 " tribute unto the faithful, religious, and orthodox, that is in plain
 " terms unto themselves, any peculiar privilege or power above other
 " mortals in civil concerns ; or who upon pretence of religion
 " do challenge any manner of authority over such as are not associ-
 " ated with them in their ecclesiastical communion : I say these have
 " no right to be tolerated by the magistrate ; as neither those that will
 " not own and teach the duty of tolerating all men in matters of mere
 " religion. For what do these and the like doctrines signify, but that
 " they may and are ready upon any occasion to seize the government,
 " and possess themselves of the estates and fortunes of their fellow-
 " subjects ; and that they only ask leave to be tolerated by the ma-
 " gistrate so long, until they find themselves strong enough to effect it ?

As filth, sweet cleanliness; as darkness, light; 560
Deformity, fair grace; hell, heav'n all bright.

And our great master in each various scene,
Was equal, and inflexibly serene;
Was affable, and easy of access;
Affectionate, and studious ev'ry one to bless; 565
Of unreserv'd familiarity,
From pride, from arrogance, and passion free;
Modest, and humble, patient, and resign'd,
Of a contented, and a tranquil mind, }
To contemplation, and to solitude inclin'd. 570
Him ev'ry heav'nly virtue did adorn,
Mild as the splendor of the rising morn,
Yet firm, and fearless, in defence of right;
Unwon by flattery, as unaw'd by might.
A regular discretion he maintain'd; 575
From rash and useless danger he refrain'd;
He shun'd the persecution of a foe,
Where honor and fair conscience would allow:
But where society's molested good,
Clearly demanded he should be withstood, 580
No timid, paltry, prudence could controul,
The fix'd and noble vigor of his soul.

'Gainst

'Gainst vice with gen'rous indignation mov'd,
 In his heart's ardent language he reprov'd,
 The supercilious, smooth, hypocrisy, 585
 Of the proud Scribe, and treach'rous Pharisee.
 As the great cenfor scourges Virtue's foes,
 What an exalted dignity he shews !
 What nervous words ! what manly eloquence !
 What keen severity ; what finish'd sense ! 590
 Nor he his satyr pour'd on these alone,
 But lash'd the haughty tyrant on the throne.

And now his sacred embassy to close,
 To heav'n-allied Jerusalein he goes :
 And when the city he beheld, he said, 595
 (And for its fate a tender tear he shed)
 " O hadst thou known from whence thy blessings rise !
 " But now 'tis hid for ever from thine eyes ;
 " For as thou did'st not thy Messiah know,
 " Lo ! the day comes, when thy relentless foe, 600

M

" Shall

Line 592. " The same day there came certain of the Pharisees
 " saying unto him, Get thee out and depart hence : for Herod will
 " kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that Fox."
 (Luke, chap. xiii. ver. 31, 32.) Some commentators dwell with
 great admiration upon the propriety of calling Herod, (who was
 a subtle, bloody, and relentless tyrant,) a Fox.

" Shall keep thee in by trenches round thee thrown ;

" Thee and thy children in thee shall cast down ;

" Shall make thy fabrics level with the ground.

" And not one stone upon another found."

With extasy, unfelt before, the crowd, 605

Burst with one voice in acclamations loud ;

At once on ev'ry side Hosannahs ring,

To DAVID's son, to Israel's potent king ;

And some inspir'd with active zeal, the road,,

With garments and the palm's fair branches strew'd.

When this illustrious king his scepter sway'd,

And his divine authority display'd,

He gave not honors, titles, pow'r, or wealth,

But happiness, and sight, and speech, and health.

And to the sacred temple as he went, 615

With mercy big, and on salvation bent,

The dumb, the skies with loud Hosannah's tore ;

And the lame ran exultingly before ;

While in his new-unfolded ear, the sound,

The deaf, in rapturous amazement found ; 620

" And

Line 618, &c.. " Say to them that are of a faithful heart, Be strong, fear not : behold your God will come with vengeance, he will come with a recompence : he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing : for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Isaiah, chap. xxxv. 4, 5, 6.

And the blind, saw with heav'n's refreshing light,
 The great, immortal, author, of all light.
 The SAVIOUR cometh, as the Seer of old,
 Big with the scenes of future days, foretold.

“ Daughter of Zion! raise thy cheerful voice! 625

“ O daughter of Jerusalem, rejoice!

“ Lowly, and meek, behold! thy king appears;

“ And with him Justice and Salvation bears;

“ No more from Ephraim shall the trumpet clang;

“ No more the deathful battle-bow shall twang; 630

“ Nor in Jerusalem, in pomp of war,

“ The horse and chariot thunder to afar;

“ Peace to the heathen also he shall send,

“ And his dominion o'er the earth extend.”

But they who in Jerusalem bore sway, 635

With pride and selfish passions led away,

Who wish'd for a Messiah that should throw,

Terror and desolation on each foe;

Like CÆSAR, or like ALEXANDER, wage,

Eternal war, with unrelenting rage; 640

And bear from conquest all the loud acclaim,

Of worthless greatness, and inglorious fame:

These so obscure a benefactor scorn'd,

With garish pomp and splendor unadorn'd:

Yet stung, inflam'd, by envy, and by hate, 645
 Intent to seize, his death they meditate.
 When lo! a false disciple there appear'd,
 To whom alone his lord was unindear'd;
 (A selfish, insincere, cold-hearted, man,
 Whose narrow, worldly, prudence was his bane,)
 And struck a cov'nant for a trifling pay,
 His friend, companion, tutor, to betray.
 The love of money, urg'd him, and we find,
 This was the master-passion of his mind;
 For when the traitor kept their little store, 655
 He stole what charity design'd the poor.
 O thou, my son, who wishest happy days,
 The grace of heav'n, man's unsuborned praise,
 This scoundrel passion from thy bosom wring!
 'Tis venomous as is the diplas' sting, 660
 That gives an unextinguishable thirst,
 And makes us, having our desires, accurst.
 For should it ever taint thy wholesome heart,
 Some means of fell perdition 'twill impart,
 Tho' not so great, to that excess supreme, 665
 With this foul ulcer, this opprobrious theme.---
 And ah what heart, could have conceiv'd their aim?
 What tongue, the horrid sequel can proclaim?

See

Whom do they spurn, and load with ev'ry wrong?
 Whom, like a felon, do they drag along? 670
 Whom do they mock, and buffet with the rod?
 My Lord, my King, my Saviour, and my God?
 See where they lead, their hellish rage to wreak,
 See where they nail, (I tremble while I speak,)
 On yonder tree, the earth's eternal King, 675
 Thro' whom light, life, and all creation spring!
 How his wounds blacken! and his body wreathes!
 Yet tortur'd thus he naught but pity breathes!
 How his heart heaves with bitter agony!
 Look down from thy triumphant infamy! 680
 O meek, and spotless sufferer, look down!
 More honor'd thus, than with a dazzling crown!
 He leans his head upon his sacred breast,
 O'er-whelm'd with sorrows, and with pain oppress;
 The sun, disgusted at the sight retires; 685
 Hark to that groan profound! he now expires!
 The temple rends, rocks burst, and all around,
 Trembles, with formidable pangs, the ground;
 The graves are open'd, and the dead arise;
 Ah deed of horror! day of dire surprize! 690
 Which are the quick? the dead?-my fainting heart!
 Nature with her Creator will depart!

My

My mighty Master! and my Saviour blest!
 Worthy in dearest love to be addrest!
 O for a Seraph's voice, a Seraph's fire! 695
 For all that heav'n propitious could inspire!
 To the sublimest notes my harp to raise,
 And sing thy glories with becoming praise!

Line 692, OUR SAVIOUR is here called the Creator of Nature, not as the original supreme author of all things, but as the second principle, or minister, through whom, GOD himself, mediately framed every thing. St. PAUL writes, Ephe. iii. 9. "And to make
 "all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the
 "beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD, who created all
 "things by JESUS CHRIST." And again, Hebrews i. 1, 2. "GOD
 "who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto
 "the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us
 "by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom
 "also he made the worlds."

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

ARGU.

ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

The Description of the foretold Destruction of Jerusalem interwoven in the Poem, as from thence may be drawn, an important and solid argument in favor of Christianity.---TITUS, (the presumptive successor to the Roman Empire,) appears before the city---Casts trenches round it, when the Jews are assembled for the celebration of the Pass-over---As the besieged make their escape from the city, they are taken by the Romans and crucified.---So many are crucified, that at last no wood to make the crosses can be found, or space wherein to fix the crosses when made---The avenging hand of God may be traced in this.---Great signs, and fearful sights, as foretold by OUR SAVIOUR---mentioned also by TACITUS.---A Roman soldier throws a flaming brand into the temple though the Emperor had given decisive commands to the army, that it should be spared. That, and the whole city, are burnt to the ground.

The

A R G U M E N T.

The prophecy of OUR SAVIOUR is literally fulfilled.--The destruction is so complete, that "one stone is not left upon another."---Compassionate reflection on the fate of Judæa--Her future glory. Reasoning on the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem---The prophecy must have come from GOD---The minute particulars that it describes, could not have been declared by chance.---It is allowed to have been divulged before the event. It is a strong proof of the truth of the Gospel. On the internal evidence that the Gospel bears--Of the letter, and the spirit, of the Gospel---of the advantages arising from the latter---of the meekness---of the unshaken resolution that is becoming in a Christian.---Though he should obey legal and just authority, he is enjoined to be free, and not the servant of mankind.---Tyrants, nearly as much reprobated by the Gospel, as blasphemers.---It is not churlishly severe, but permits a reasonable gratification of our desires---on the delights it affords here---Promises a glorious triumph over death---and to those who practise its rules, supreme and never-fading honor, and happiness, hereafter.---Conclusion.

B O O K

BOOK the FOURTH.

BUT now, O Muse! in other strains relate,
Superb Jerusalem's predicted fate. 700

And lo! the minister of wrath, appears,
And in his train in gloomy pomp he bears,
War, famine, and destruction, leash'd like hounds,
That pant howe'er for freedom from their bonds.

The spoil-devoted city with surprize, 705

See high encircling trenches round her rise;

When all her num'rous children she contain'd,

Who at a solemn festival remain'd;

O'er all the land Rome's rav'ning eagle flies,

And to a desert turns a paradise; 710

Yet in her bosom fiercest factions rage,

Which not the public danger can assuage;

Mad discord, pleas'd with her torne robe, was there,

Who with grim aspect follow'd blood-stain'd war.

Famine, who mow'd her thousands to the ground,

In ghastly state stalk'd horrible around;

N

And

Line 701. Most of the following circumstances relative to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, are taken from JOSEPHUS's History of the Jewish Wars, which is highly deserving of perusal.

And her detested steps she bent where'er.
 She reign'd a solitary tyrant there :
 From which as many strive their flight to make,
 Their flight the watchful Romans overtake ; 720
 And urg'd by an invet'rate hatred's gall,
 Their quiv'ring bodies on the cross they nail.
 At last no wood to make them can be found,
 Or where to place them no uncumber'd ground,
 So many round the city did they rear, 725
 On which their captives parched in the air.
 Ah blind to truth ! ah fascinated race !
 Not God's avenging hand in this to trace !
 And wonder-moving sights, and signs, from heav'n,
 In terrible magnificence are giv'n ; 730

Yet

Line 729, and 730. OUR SAVIOUR speaking, (before the event) of the destruction of Jerusalem, says, " And great earth-quakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences ; and fearful sights " and great signs shall there be from heaven." Luke, ch. xxi. v. 11.

TACITUS, speaking of it, (after the event) says, Evenerant prodigia quæ neque hostiis neque votis piare fas habet gens superstitioni obnoxia, religionibus adversa. Visæ per cælum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma, et subito nubium igne collucere templum. Expasæ repente delubri fores, et audita major humana vox, excedere deos : simul ingens motus excedentium, Quæ pauci in metum trahobant : pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum posissentur. Lib. 5. cap. 13. histor.

Yet the besieg'd hence new resolve assume,
 And on God's former gifts themselves they plume;
 From which to wildest follies they are borne,
 And all the terms of a surrender scorn.
 E'en in recital, their portentous crimes, 735
 Surprise and terrify succeeding times;
 'Twas there, (ah horrid deed!) with hunger wild,
 The wretched mother fed upon her child:
 For there with her dishevel'd, uncouth hair,
 And sullen eye, and madding mind to dare. 740 }
 Whate'er extravagant, sat blasphemous despair.

At last, tho' long with-held by frantic deeds,
 The Roman intrepidity succeeds;
 The city, whilom heav'n protected, falls,
 And bows her lofty and wide-spreading walls. 745
 From ev'ry side impetuous rush her foes,
 Like a vast river that it's banks o'er-flows.
 Cruel and fierce, as ev'ning wolves, they rage,
 Nor can their emp'ror's voice their heat assuage;
 It blazes uncontroll'd, and he, in vain, 750
 Directs them from the temple to abstain:

N 2

For

Line 738. The particulars of this feral wickedness, of which as we read we shudder, are fully described by JOSEPHUS. It is mentioned here to shew that the prophecy of MOSES [for which see the beginning of the preface] was fulfilled,

For in defiance of his known command,
 A soldier throws within a flaming brand.
 Ah what avail'd, as heav'n its fall had doom'd,
 The gay magnificence with which it bloom'd! 755
 Its precious stores of consecrated things!
 Its gifts thro' many an age from mighty kings!
 Its gold, and dazzling splendors, which afar,
 Shone like a meteor blazing in the air!
 Ah what avail'd, the art with which 'twas rear'd, 760
 And there that God's dread presence had appear'd!
 Its gorgeous beauties by the foe were crush'd,
 And with the besom of destruction brush'd,
 Where stood the wrath-struck city, did appear,
 As if no dwelling ever had been there. 765
 And

Line 755. See the description of the temple, in JOSEPHUS's Jewish Antiquities.

Line 765. &c. JOSEPHUS, in the Wars of the Jews, book vii. ch. 18. has these words, [which I am sorry I have not an opportunity of transcribing, according to a more elegant translation than that by L'ESTRANGE,] "Thus was Jerusalem taken and utterly destroyed
 "in the second year of VESPASIAN; having been five times taken
 "before." And again he says, "This was in fine the issue of the
 "siege, and when the soldiers had neither rapine nor bloodshed for
 "their spleens to work upon [as they would not have been idle if they
 "had had matter) TITUS ordered them to lay the city and temple
 "level with the ground, and leave nothing standing but the three fa-
 "mous Turrets, Phasaël, Hippicos, and Mariamne, that overtop'd
 "all the rest, and a piece of a wall to the westward of the town, where
 "he

And as OUR SAVIOUR his disciples told,
 Deigning the book of future times t'unfold,
 " Its fabrics all were level with the ground,
 " Nor was one stone upon another found."

Ah wretched, spurn'd, Judea ! doom'd to mourn,
 Thy borders ravag'd, and thy laurels torn ;
 Thy few surviving children led afar,
 To grace the conqueror's triumphant car,
 Or sold as slaves, and scatter'd o'er the world,
 As the loose stubble by the storm is hurl'd. 780
 The white wing'd day, shall come, when thou no
 more,

Thy torne and whither'd laurels shall deplore,

Which

" he designed a garrison ; the towers to remain as so many monuments
 " to posterity of the Roman power and conduct in taking them. This
 " order was punctually executed, and all the rest laid so flat, that the
 " place looked as if it had never been inhabited. This was the end
 " of the Jerusalem faction, a mad and seditious people : and this was
 " also the end of the most glorious city in the universe." TITUS, as
 we are here told, after the attack ordered the temple as well as the
 city to be laid level with the ground. In a preceding part of the His-
 tory however we are told, that before and during the attack, he gave
 particular and decisive commands to his soldiers that the former should
 be spared.

Line 781, &c. St. PAUL says, (addressing himself to the Gentiles)

" For I would not brethren that ye should be ignorant of this mystery

" [least ye should be wise in your own conceits] that blindness in part

is

Which on thy brow exalted, shall be seen,
Complete for ever, and for ever green !

Sceptic, to reason, now awhile attend, 785
Which with her melody the muse shall blend ;
Reason, which vainly you profess to know,
Which ponders much, and which determines flow ;
And then invet'rate prejudice will grant,
(As on the theme we pensively descant,) 790
This fam'd prediction could have only flow'd,
From the omniscient mind itself of GOD,
Which past, and future, as the present, sees,
For with the prophecy th' event agrees.
Could chance, (the thought is too absurdly bold !)
Have each minute particular foretold ?
That in that very age, could chance have said,
E'er some who heard were number'd with the dead,
When all her children were assembled there,
Against the wrath-doom'd city should appear, 800
The desolating foe, with armies vast,
Who all around th' incircling trench should cast ?
Could

" is happened unto Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come
" in. And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written there shall come
" out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from
" Jacob." Romans, chap. ii. ver. 25, 26.

Could it each nicer fact have prophecy'd,
 Which all were most exactly verified?
 That 'twas a prophecy, that 'twas declar'd, 805
 Before the circumstance itself appear'd,
 Is controverted, doubted yet by none,
 And faithful history the fact will own.
 Now sceptic, answer, tell the consequence,
 That simply, naturally flows from hence, 810
 'Tis that our faith is true, and comes from GOD,
 Which spite of stubbornness must be allow'd.
 What feint objection can to this be made?
 Or can elab'rate sophistry evade?
 To candor, reason, does it not appear, 815
 Too strong for cavil, and for doubt too clear?

Nor

Line 797. OUR SAVIOUR says, in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, (as it will appear to an attentive reader of the Evangelists,) " Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till " all these things be fulfilled." (Matth. chap. xxiv. ver. 34.) And he says to Peter of John.---" If I will that he tarry till I come, what " is that to thee?" (John chap. xxi. ver. 22.) The coming of Christ in the language of the New Testament, very frequently means the destruction of Jerusalem, which event the Apostle John survived.

Line 805, 806. St. MATTHEW, St. MARK, and St. LUKE, mention the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem; and it is allowed that they wrote their Gospels before the event. St. MATTHEW is said to have written his six years after the death of CHRIST, and he and St. MARK are known to have died before the completion of the prophecy. It is uncertain when St. LUKE died. St. JOHN who wrote his Gospel after its completion, mentions nothing of that, nor of the prophecy.

Nor can it be improper to appeal,
 As a collat'ral proof, to what we feel;
 To that internal evidence it bears,
 Which irresistible to most appears. 820
 The heav'nly tenor of its doctrines shews,
 That from the source of ev'ry good it flows;
 For to such heighth our nature they refine,
 They make the human, somewhat the divine:
 If its mild genial spirit we pursue, 825
 And its destructive letter we eschew:
 The letter leads to misery and death,
 The spirit is th' Eternal's living breath.
 How happy is the man whom that inspires,
 With its blest movements, and its sacred fires! 830
 To whom the glory and the bliss is giv'n,
 To be the friend of GOD, the heir of heav'n.
 He feels no terror, and no pang that tears,
 In his correct and temp'rate breast he bears,

A fet-

Line 825, 826. ST. PAUL says, "Our sufficiency is of God.
 "Who hath also made us able ministers of the New Testament, not
 "of the letter but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit
 "giveth life." Second Epist. Corinth. chap. iii. ver. 5. 6.—The
 difference between the letter and the spirit of the Gospel is pointed
 out with great judgement in a Paraphrase on the four Evangelists by
 Dr. SAMUEL CLARKE. It is a book which merits the attention
 of every Christian.

A settled peace which nothing can controul, 835
The calm eternal sunshine of the soul.

Tho' to the sea the mountains should be cast,
And tho' its waters bellow thro' the blast,

And tho' the mountains like a leaf should shake,
With the wild swelling that the sea doth make, 840

Yet as he knows himself of heav'n approv'd,
He would e'en then be equal, and unmov'd.

No dupe he is, tho' fraught with boundless love,
As serpents wife, tho' harmless as the dove;

Firm, but not furious; without dazzling clear: 845
Meek, but not mean; and humble, without fear.

His are the pleasures, of the temp'rate mind,
Where mildness, dwells with chastity refin'd.

How sweeter, than mad anger's headlong gust,
Its fierce convulsions, or the pangs of lust! 850

But if thou think'st that happiness can rise,
From the contam'nate source of sensual joys,

In sense go wallow, as in mud the swine,
Immerge in sloth, lust, gluttony, and wine:

The pure ethereal soul with these pollute, 855
And o'er insulted man, exalt the brute.

Yet soon deceiv'd, 'tis base thou wilt confess,
In animal delight to seek for happiness;

O

Which

Which brutes themselves with truer pleasure know,
 For then like thee reflection gives no woe ; 860
 No anxious cares for future hoards annoy,
 Their low, but undisturb'd, and even, joy.
 And ah my son of anger much beware,
 For that to hell, like treach'rous wealth, is near, }
 On either side of which, their palaces appear. 865
 And if thy foe, is with resentment fierce,
 Eager with words or steel thy heart to pierce,
 Make him not more so by affronts, but swage,
 And melt by kindness his pernicious rage ;
 Good thus unlook'd for mildness will impart, 870
 And soften any but a savage heart.
 But if thy proud and thy revengeful mind,
 To these mild arts of love be disinclin'd,
 On each offence thy hand indignant raise,
 Or draw thy sword, and like a fire-work blaze ; 875
 To thee intemperate, perhaps, the sword,
 The death thou wishest others may afford.
 But tho' when wrong'd, the Christian should be
 meek,
 Nor wild revenge from his own hand should seek ;
 Yet in that cause where virtue urges on ; 880
 Where much for man by firmness may be won ;

To

To which the love of human nature moves ;
 That justice and that wisdom well approves ;
 Not earth, not hell, should in the least controul,
 The gen'rous purpose of his daring soul, 885
 He is humanely, regularly brave,
 And nobly scorns to be of pow'r a slave ;
 A slav'ring sycophant, or truckling tool ;
 Obedient tho' to just and legal rule ;
 (Conscious that he who thwarts well-ordered laws
 Upon himself dread condemnation draws,)
 And not forgetful, that he is injoin'd,
 Be free, and not the servant of mankind.
 And if he bears of pow'r, the sacred trust,
 To those from whom that pow'r proceeds, he's just ;

O 3

Nor

Line 884. There are some people who imagine that Christianity enjoins us, like my Lady's Gentlewoman, only to say and to do soft things. They are mistaken. It enjoins us in the defence of truth, to be intrepid as lions. OUR SAVIOUR satirizes the Scribes and Pharisees, in the most nervous and emphatical language. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matth. xxiii. 33. And he says to his disciples, "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, fear him who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." Luke xii. 4, 5. And St. Paul, says, (meaning to recommend it,) "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Hebrews, xii. 4.

Line 893. "Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men." 1. Epist. Corinth. chap. vii. ver. 23.

Nor aims a gen'rous people to oppress,
 But blended knows their mutual happiness.
 Heav'n shuts 'gainst tyrants its eternal door,
 And scarce detests the foul blasphemer more.
 And our blest Lord, ambition to reprove, 900
 To teach content, and unassuming love,
 With humble meekness, bending unabash'd,
 With his own hands, the feet of his disciples wash'd.
 Nor, sceptic, say, deceiv'd, or with the aim,
 The will-full aim its precepts to blaspheme, 905
 Nor say, the Gospel churlishly severe,
 Bids us from nature's just desires forbear.
 Tho' lawless lust it checks, it will approve,
 The tender pleasures of connubial love.
 And tho' by pity mov'd to those who weep, 910
 Our eyes in sympathetic tears we steep,
 Yet where of mirth resounds the lively voice,
 We there in mirth accordant should rejoice:
 For our great master at the nuptial feast.
 Of which he kindly shar'd, an humble guest, 915
 Dis-

Line 896. " But Jesus called them unto him and said. Ye knew
 " that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and
 " they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be
 " so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be
 " your servant: even as the son of man came not to be ministered
 " unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
 Matth. chap. xx. ver. 25, 26, 27, 28.

Line 908-—909. Epist. Corinth. chap. vii. ver. 2, 5, 4, 5.

Disdain'd with sour austerity annoy,
 The temp'rate pleasures of a decent joy;
 And as he deign'd the hallow'd bliss to join,
 Th' obedient water, colour'd into wine.---
 O Muse! on the lov'd theme, delighted dwell, 920
 With growing rapture, of its blessings, tell!
 In pain, 'tis pleasure; and in sickness, health;
 In sorrow, friends; and e'en in begg'ry, wealth.
 And it declares, (ah highly pleasing thought!
 With a perennial source of comfort fraught!) 925
 That thou whose with'ring and infectious breath,
 Pervades thro' nature, all-subduing death!
 Declares the glad auspicious day will come,
 When thou thyself, thyself, shalt meet thy doom:
 Thou tyrant merciless! thou gormand fell! 930
 Thou king of dread! thou meagre hound of hell
 Thy dart be broken! harmless be thy sting!
 And all thy min'isters, vanish with their king!
 Then the elect, shall enter that abode,
 Prepar'd for virtue by a bounteous God, 935
 The Captain of Salvation at their head,
 Under whose banner they have fought or bled;
 Where its bright guerdon shall receive each worth;
 Where as the sun the righteous shall shine forth;

To

To whom in bliss eternal shall be giv'n, 940
 All the magnificent superb of heaven;
 Where the calm breast shall never heave a sigh;
 Nor ever tear shall trickle from the eye;
 Where the sun's seat no more they shall deplore;
 Where thirst and hunger shall disturb no more;
 But they shall be by their Redeemer fed;
 By him to living founts of water led;
 Supremely blest in everlasting joy,
 That never palls, and never knows annoy;
 Greater than aught luxuriant fancy feigns, 950
 When in wild pleasure unconfin'd she reigns;
 When they shall drink of rivers of delight:
 In the glad confines of celestial light;
 And brilliant on their foreheads bear display'd,
 A crown of glory that will never fade; 955
 When laughing scenes to charm the sight appear;
 And heav'nly harmony delights the ear,

In

Line 941. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;
 "neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the lamb
 "which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead
 "them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all
 "tears from their eyes." Revelations, chap. vii. ver. 16, 17.

Line 957. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multi-
 "tude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty
 "thunderings, saying, Alleluiah: for the Lord God omnipotent
 "reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him."
 Revelation, chap. xix. ver. 6, 7.

In all th' etherial hosts triumphant strain,
That thou LORD GOD, omnipotent dost reign.

And now no more like mariner forlorn, 960
At random by the winds and billows borne,
Perplex'd, I wander in a sea of doubt,
Without a compass, and a star without,
By whose unchanging lustre I may guide,
My vessel, o'er the vast and trackless tide: 965
For bright on high the sacred star appears;
And ev'ry danger of the passage cheers;
Directs me where my steady course to keep,
And gilds the sullen horrors of the deep.

F I N I S.

in all the celestial hosts, the highest throne,
To whom I owe the crown of glory;
And now my heart is full of joy,
At what thy love and goodness bring;
Remember, I would not be of doubt,
With all a company, and without doubt,
By whose unchanging love I now stand;
My vessel, o'er the vast and trackless sea,
For light on high the torch that appears;
And every danger, every change, every
Doubt and every fear, I leave to thee;
And give the praise to thee alone.



1. 1. 2.

